






Spring snowstorm in the Pahute Peak Wilderness

Chapter 2: Alternatives

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Alternatives

Chapter 2 describes five alternatives for the management of the Black Rock – High Rock planning area: the No Action Alternative and three action alternatives, Alternatives A, B, and C. The three action alternatives were developed to present a range of management options to guide decision making for managing uses and activities within the planning area. These management decisions are intended to minimize adverse impacts on cultural and natural resources while providing for compatible resource use and development opportunities, consistent with current law, regulation, and policy.

Alternatives are developed to establish a framework for measuring the potential impacts on the planning area that might occur as a result of management decisions. The alternatives do not themselves constitute management decisions, but instead represent reasonable approaches to managing land and activities consistent with law, regulation and policy. Within the text of Chapter 2, the reader will encounter icons designed to assist in identifying statements and decisions that are included to comply with the Wilderness Act or other laws, regulations, and policy.  Decisions related to Wilderness Areas will appear with icons similar to those at the beginning and end of this sentence.   Text related to other laws, regulations, or policies will appear with the icons that surround this sentence.



The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has the discretion to select an alternative in its entirety or to combine aspects of the various alternatives presented in this final to develop the Proposed RMP. The reader may also select and/or combine aspects of the various alternatives when providing comment on the plan. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires the development and testing of several alternatives, including a No Action Alternative, to measure the potential impacts that a set of actions could have on the area. According to NEPA, BLM must consider these impacts in developing the RMP for the planning area, as described in Chapter 1.

The planning area consists of a complex geographic setting that sometimes requires different management activities to accommodate distinct geographic characteristics.

2.1 MANAGEMENT ZONING

In the alternatives, “zoning” organizes some management decisions by geographic areas. The planning area is divided into different zones that emphasize the values or experiences available in these areas. This approach establishes three zoning categories for the planning area that characterize the

area's physical and social settings and the types of activities that may be encountered or anticipated by the area's visitors. All public lands within the planning area are assigned to one of the three zones, as shown on Maps 2-23, 2-34, 2-43. The zones are Wilderness, Rustic, and Front Country. Appendix B characterizes the different types of visitor experiences that may be encountered in each of the zones.

The characteristics of each zone are similar for all of the action alternatives, but the location and extent of the various zones and the management actions within each zone differ among the action alternatives.

2.1.1 WILDERNESS ZONE

The Wilderness Zone encompasses Wilderness Areas and the Wilderness Study Area. This environment would offer the greatest opportunity for challenge, risk, and adventure. Self-sufficiency would be crucial. Contact with other people would be minimal.

In Alternative C, the Wilderness Zone would be managed by dividing the Wilderness Areas and the Wilderness Study Area into Wild Emphasis and Natural Emphasis Zones (see Glossary).

2.1.2 RUSTIC ZONE

This environment would offer possibilities for challenge, risk, and adventure, and would require self-sufficiency. Interaction with other people would be expected during certain seasons and times, but overall, there would be ample opportunities for solitary experiences.

2.1.3 FRONT COUNTRY ZONE

Exposure to challenge, risk and adventure would be relatively low in this zone compared with the other recreation zones. Interaction with other persons would be common during certain seasons and times, but solitude and quiet would also be available some of the time.

2.2 OVERVIEW OF THE ALTERNATIVES

The following descriptions provide an overview of the alternatives developed and the unique aspects of each.

2.2.1 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

(Continuation of Present Management)

This alternative involves continuation of the management activities that already occur in the planning area. These activities are now governed by existing land use plans (i.e., the Paradise-Denio, Sonoma-Gerlach, Tulead-Homecamp, and Cowhead-Massacre Management Framework Plans) to the extent that these plans are consistent with the requirements of the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area Act of 2000, as amended (the Act), and the Wilderness Act. Changes to existing management practices would be made for the sole purpose of compliance with these and other applicable laws and regulations. Natural resources and visitation would be managed in accordance with existing law, regulation, and policy.

2.2.2 ALTERNATIVE A (Emphasis on Natural Processes)

In Alternative A, management activities would emphasize providing visitors with the opportunity to experience, in a self-directed fashion, the physical setting that the emigrants and other early visitors to the area experienced in the mid-1800s. Visitors would experience the area as a cross section of the northwestern Great Basin, where natural processes have been allowed to continue with limitations on visitor activities to protect both visitors and resources. Resource management would minimize

intervention into natural processes to allow their continued progression through subtle forms of management and monitoring.

2.2.3 ALTERNATIVE B (Emphasis on Response to Change)

This alternative would also emphasize providing visitors with opportunities to experience, in a self-directed fashion, the physical setting that the emigrants and other early visitors to the area experienced in the mid-1800s. Its management approach is distinguished from that of Alternative A in that it would more readily identify and accommodate changing conditions over time by allowing the application of management decisions responsive to these changing conditions. This alternative has more flexibility to respond to increasing visitation and risks to resources that could occur over time.

2.2.4 ALTERNATIVE C (Emphasis on Visitation and Interpretation)

This alternative emphasizes active visitor support. Resource management activities would allow necessary intervention in geographic areas, at varying levels, to enable visitors to experience both the natural and the historic context, while ensuring that resource protection was not compromised. Under this alternative, the Wilderness Zone would be further divided into Wild Emphasis and Natural Emphasis Zones.

2.2.5 ALTERNATIVE D (Proposed RMP)

This Alternative is new and was not contained in the Draft EIS and RMP. It is the result of public and agency comments and represents the Proposed management, or Proposed Resource Management Plan for the planning area. The management decisions constituting this alternative are contained separately in Volume 3 of this Final EIS and RMP.

The Proposed RMP, otherwise referred to as Alternative D, draws primarily upon Alternative B, the preferred alternative in the DEIS, but selectively adopts portions of the other three alternatives as recommended by the RAC subgroup and public comment in a manner that minimizes initial on-the-ground changes in management in the short-term while providing flexibility to increase management intensity as public use increases. It also protects the resources and uses recognized in the enabling legislation. Alternative D provides additional opportunities for vehicle use and allows geothermal energy development in the South Playa with a no surface occupancy restriction.

2.3 CONSTRAINTS AND GOALS

2.3.1 BROAD DIRECTION

Specific limitations were considered during formulation of the alternatives. These are constraints that must be recognized in advance to ensure that plan decisions are lawful, realistic, and achievable.

The Act establishing the NCA and the Wilderness Areas covered by this plan, provides clear direction on some issues that must be addressed in this RMP, and eliminated from consideration other issues that are often addressed in other RMPs. For this reason, the range of alternatives considered in this RMP and the scope of management decisions within each alternative are somewhat narrower than those found in many RMPs.

BLM also must comply with other laws and regulations (e.g., the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, (FLPMA) and the Endangered Species Act) that were in place before establishment of the Act.

These legal and regulatory limitations govern BLM management activities and are documented in Appendix A.

2.3.2 GOALS

The planning process for this planning area included development of broad goals to ensure that the RMP would be consistent with the spirit and intent of legislative and other constraints and with the overall mission of the National Landscape Conservation System.

BLM worked with a subgroup created by two resource advisory councils (RAC) to identify these and other goals for the effort. This group, known as the RAC Subgroup, is composed of representatives of the two RACs, as well as citizen members with particular interests in the planning area, including representatives of tribal governments.

Based on input from the RAC Subgroup and other sources, such as a state NCA planning team, scoping comments, laws and regulations, and other BLM direction, a number of goals were developed to guide the planning process for this Final EIS/RMP. These goals are listed below.

Goal 1: Provide current and future generations of Americans with unique opportunities to experience what the emigrants experienced.

- Preserve significant segments and the setting of the national historic emigrant trails within the planning area
- Preserve opportunities for solitude and primitive experiences within the view shed of historic emigrant trails.

Goal 2: Protect a large area of the Northern Great Basin in its current, predominantly natural state and prevent further decline of associated resources.

- Preserve archaeological, paleontological, geological, and geographical resources of the region
- Protect the remote and undeveloped character of the landscape
- Foster scientific inquiry and research to enhance resource management and public education (See Appendix M).

Goal 3: Support visitor services and resource management activities in a manner that protects the planning area's resources.

- Provide educational materials to the public to assist in the protection and interpretation of the area's resources
- Provide opportunities for visitor activities, including large-scale permitted activities, on the Black Rock Desert Playa as the primary destination for the majority of visitors to the NCA
- Maintain access for the reasonable use and enjoyment of the planning area.

Goal 4: Manage the planning area's plant and animal species in a way that will provide for their continued presence as part of an ecologically healthy system.

- Manage wild horses and burros to achieve identified appropriate management levels (AML)
- Recover populations and habitats of special status, previously eliminated, or declining plant and animal species
- Enhance native and desired naturalized wildlife.

Goal 5: Manage Wilderness Areas for visitors' use and enjoyment, in a manner that will provide opportunities for solitude and primitive experiences while leaving the areas unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness.

- Manage Wilderness Areas under a principle of nondegradation, by using the minimum tools, equipment, and structures necessary to successfully, safely, and economically accomplish effective wilderness management
- Allow for spontaneity of use and preserve as much freedom from regulation as possible
- Manage nonconforming but accepted uses in a way that prevents unnecessary degradation of the area's wilderness character.

Goal 6: Allow for social and economic benefits compatible with the protection of the area.

- Maintain permitted grazing activities in a manner compatible with the rangeland health of the area and consistent with standards and guidelines
- Manage and sustain multiple-use activities consistent with applicable legislation

- Provide reasonable access to privately owned land or interests (including valid and existing rights) on land within the boundaries of the planning area, consistent with historical multiple use.

Goal 7: Provide for the protection of cultural, religious, and agricultural values developed through historical practices in the planning area.

Goal 8: Cooperate and partner with local, state, tribal, and other collaborating agencies and private interests to support resource management activities and ensure consistency among plans and policies, where these are consistent with Federal laws and regulations.

2.3.3 RESOURCE-SPECIFIC CONSTRAINTS

Resource-specific constraints are listed, by resource, in the Program Planning Criteria section of Appendix A. These resource-specific constraints are additive to the overarching constraints documented in the appendix. Thus, when a resource area has resource-specific constraints, the management decisions for that resource would be limited by those constraints *in addition to* the broader legal, regulatory, and policy limitations that apply to all BLM management decision making.

2.4 MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE COMMON TO THE NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE AND ALTERNATIVES A, B, AND C

This section describes management guidance and decisions that are applicable or common to the No Action Alternative and Alternatives A, B, and C. Although an alternative might involve specific management decisions unique to it, there are also decisions that appear in alternatives No Action, A, B, and C. Rather than repeat these later, identical decisions for each alternative description, this Final EIS and RMP presents these common-to-all decisions here, in one section. Management decisions that are common to these alternatives would be implemented under any alternative selected. The common to all alternatives are, however, incorporated in the Proposed RMP (found in Volume 3) and may have been edited to provide clarity and readability.

2.4.1 LAND HEALTH STANDARDS

Rangeland Health Standards developed by the Sierra Front–Northwest Great Basin Resource Advisory Council would continue to apply to lands grazed by livestock in the portions of the planning unit under the jurisdiction of the Winnemucca Field Office. These standards are contained in Appendix C.

Rangeland Health Standards developed by the Northeastern California Resource Advisory Council would continue to apply to lands grazed by livestock in the portions of the planning unit under the jurisdiction of the Surprise Field Office. These standards are contained in Appendix C.

2.4.2 TRANSPORTATION AND OHV ROUTES

2.4.2.1 Objective

To provide a transportation network for effective access, consistent with the Act, public safety, and resource objectives.





2.4.2.2 Transportation Management

Three access roads with railroad crossings to the playa would be added to the BLM road system as local roads, and the roads and crossings would be improved as appropriate to meet railroad crossing safety standards.

Together, BLM system roads and routes; non-BLM roads, including state and county roads; and designated off-highway vehicle (OHV) areas constitute the transportation network for the planning area. This transportation network would be managed in accordance with a transportation plan consistent with the intent of the NCA legislation, to provide reasonable, safe access to visitors, local residents, and property owners. (See Appendix D for road classifications and maintenance levels.)

BLM would pursue cooperative agreements with Humboldt, Pershing, and Washoe Counties regarding maintenance and to enable BLM to upgrade the Pershing County portion of Soldier Meadows Road to the same standard as the Humboldt County portion of the road.

2.4.2.3 OHV Designations

  Wilderness Areas would be closed to OHV use.  

2.4.3 CULTURAL RESOURCES, INCLUDING EMIGRANT TRAILS

2.4.3.1 Objectives

Objective 1: To protect the setting and physical traces of emigrant trails for the benefit of current and future generations.

Objective 2: To protect and interpret all other cultural resources for the benefit of current and future generations.

2.4.3.2 Cultural Resource Management, Including Emigrant Trails

BLM would establish criteria for evaluating emigrant trail traces to provide the basis for future monitoring, restrictions, and stabilization activities. It would inventory the trail in coordination with Oregon-California Trails Association guidelines (Appendix E). The emigrant trail viewsheds would be managed to retain the setting experienced by the emigrants.

Class A and B trail segments would be closed to all mechanized vehicles (Map 2-1). (Appendix E contains the definitions of the trail classes.) Parallel routes outside the immediate viewshed might be created to avoid impacts on trails. Some seasonal closures to vehicle traffic (including replica wagons used during reenactments) would occur on Class C trail segments.

A comprehensive overview and research design will be developed for the planning area. This is necessary to guide future inventories, eligibility evaluations, research needs, and other management decisions.

Additional National Historic Preservation Act Sec. 110 Class III cultural resource inventories of large areas are needed, based on the cultural resource record for the planning area. Without additional inventories and data collection, new sites would not be found and the research potential, educational benefits, and recreational possibilities of the area would not be realized.

Cultural resource inventories would be prioritized. The cultural resource inventories would focus first on the emigrant trail corridor, second on the Wilderness Areas, and finally on the remainder of the planning area, unless other needs are identified.

Outstanding eligible resources identified and recorded as a result of these inventories could be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

2.4.4 NATIVE AMERICAN VALUES

2.4.4.1 Objective

To protect Properties of Cultural and Religious Importance for the use and benefit of current and future generations.

2.4.4.2 Native American Values Management

See individual alternatives for management actions.

2.4.5 PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

2.4.5.1 Objective

To manage paleontological resources in ways that prioritize research needs, facilitate educational and recreational needs, and protect important sites.

2.4.5.2 Paleontological Management

BLM paleontological inventories would focus on:

- The West arm of the Black Rock Desert
- Soldier Meadows
- The Black Rock Desert Wilderness.

Other priorities for paleontological inventorying could be developed in the future based on new information.

2.4.6 WILDERNESS


2.4.6.1 Objectives



Objective 1: To maintain or enhance the natural untrammelled character of the Wilderness Areas.

Objective 2: To provide outstanding opportunities for visitors to experience solitude and to participate in primitive and unconfined recreation, consistent with the preservation of the area's wilderness character.


Objectives and actions that support wilderness can also be found throughout the document in other resource sections. All sections containing information relating to wilderness are bracketed with icons

2.4.6.2 Wilderness Management

 A Wilderness Management Plan (WMP) would be prepared following the completion of the RMP. The WMP will contain specific objectives, management actions, and monitoring procedures for wilderness resources in the designated Wilderness Areas. The WMP will establish the type and level of environmental assessment necessary, including "minimum requirement and minimum tool analyses" for all site-specific management actions.

Wilderness boundaries would be signed as indicated in the various alternatives.  All "ways" would be closed to motorized and mechanized vehicle use within the Wilderness Areas.  This does not include the 33 vehicle access routes, described in Chapter 3, section 3.4, that provide vehicle access to the interior of the Wilderness Areas but are not actually within the wilderness boundaries. Closed ways would be managed to maintain natural conditions and would require the occasional installation of—

- Barriers at the point where ways enter Wilderness Areas, to discourage continued motorized trespass

- Gates on ways that could occasionally be used for authorized purposes. 

2.4.7 SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS

2.4.7.1 Objectives

Objective 1: To consider for designation as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) any area with important natural or cultural resources, systems, or processes, and any area that requires special management actions to retain its values.

Objective 2: To protect free-flowing stream segments with outstandingly remarkable values.

2.4.7.2 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

If lands are acquired adjacent to an existing ACEC and the acquired lands contain relevant and important resources important to the ACEC, the acquired lands would be incorporated into the ACEC and would be managed accordingly.

If the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Wilderness Study Area were released for purposes other than wilderness, the area would be designated as an ACEC with the objective of protecting the habitat of the trout.

2.4.7.3 Wild and Scenic Rivers

See individual alternatives.

2.4.8 VEGETATION

2.4.8.1 Objectives



Objective 1: To retain sagebrush communities over at least 75 percent of the potential sagebrush habitat in the planning area with sagebrush cover sufficient to support sagebrush-dependent wildlife species, and to maintain more than 90 percent of sagebrush communities with desirable forb and grass

composition for wildlife needs over the life of the plan.

Objective 2: To retain non-sagebrush-dominated shrubland and woodland communities (e.g., salt desert shrub, mountain shrub, and Utah juniper) over greater than 75 percent of potential sites within the planning area with plant species composition that corresponds primarily to late seral ecological status over the life of the plan.

Objective 3: To achieve native herbaceous vegetation composition consistent with late seral ecological status within the planning area, and nonvascular plant species cover as appropriate to ecological site potential over the life of the plan.

Objective 4: To retain all existing aspen clones, to expand the area occupied by existing aspen stands where possible, and to achieve mixed age classes in stands over the life of the plan.

Objective 5:  To consider natural ecological processes as the dominant factor in determining the composition and distribution of plant communities in the Wilderness Zone. 

Objective 6: To protect the natural condition and biodiversity of the planning area by preventing or limiting the spread of noxious weeds [as identified in the Nevada State Noxious Weed List (Nevada Revised Statute 555.0100)] that displace native vegetation; to use Integrated Weed Management principles to detect and eradicate all existing infestations; to eliminate new infestations before they begin to spread; and to prevent or limit the spread of established weeds into areas containing little or no infestation.

Objective 7: To prevent the total acres occupied by invasive annual species (cheatgrass and other similar plants) within the planning area from increasing over the life of the plan.

Objective 8: To maintain or achieve, within 15 years, Properly Functioning Condition status for 90 percent of wetland vegetation community sites within the planning area that currently are in Properly Functioning Condition or Functional at Risk status, consistent with Land Health Standards.

2.4.8.2 Vegetation Management

Rehabilitation and restoration efforts would be conducted in areas that have been burned by wildland fires and subject to invasion by annual plants. Seed mixes would be developed to achieve a high



probability of successful establishment. Native shrub and herbaceous species would be emphasized, but nonnative species could be used in restoration or rehabilitation to increase seeding success.

Rangeland vegetation communities at risk of stand conversion from native species to introduced annuals because of wildfire might be protected through the establishment of green stripping using appropriate seed mixes and project layout consistent with the objective of maintaining a natural landscape.

Seed collection would be allowed by permit within the planning area to support restoration of native plant communities.

2.4.8.2.1 Noxious Weeds

Control of noxious weeds would be conducted using the best combination of treatment practices developed specifically for the target species and infested site, consistent with Nevada Revised Statute 555.010. Such treatments would include Best Management Practices consistent with Integrated Weed Management principles. Practices would include prevention of disturbing activities to maintain competitive vegetation cover and reduce the distribution and introduction of noxious weed seed; use of cultural and mechanical methods to physically remove noxious weeds; performance of management actions that limit the spread of noxious weeds by natural means; and application of herbicides and possibly biological controls.

 Weed infestations in the Wilderness Zone would be controlled by methods consistent with minimum tool requirements and Integrated Weed Management principles. Noxious weeds in the Wilderness Zone would be controlled using hand tools and, where manual treatments alone would not affect the weed populations, with chemical and biological methods. 

2.4.9 LIVESTOCK GRAZING

2.4.9.1 Objectives

Objective 1: To promote healthy sustainable rangeland ecosystems and maintain or restore public rangelands to Properly Functioning Condition.

Objective 2: To provide livestock forage on a sustainable basis for the foreseeable future, consistent with other resource objectives and with public land use allocations.

2.4.9.2 Grazing Management

The current livestock grazing use authorizations (Table 3-9) would be maintained until evaluations identify the need for adjustments in livestock grazing practices to meet Rangeland Health Standards or other objectives. Changes in livestock management would conform to regulations and land use plans. Monitoring, field observations, ecological site inventories, or other BLM acceptable data must support management changes.

The class of livestock in allotments would not be changed by this plan. Domestic sheep trailing would be allowed in portions of the Buffalo Hills, Blue Wing–Seven Troughs, Jackson Mountain, and Majuba Allotments where it has been previously licensed.

Areas of the Black Rock Desert shown on Map 3-5 would remain unallocated for livestock grazing, except as noted in Alternative B. The ungrazed portion of the Massacre Mountain Allotment associated with High Rock Canyon and the Little High Rock portion of the Bare Allotment would not be grazed on a regular basis. Grazing in these areas could occur under an approved grazing prescription developed specifically to accomplish the objectives of the plan.

The Mahogany Creek Enclosure portion of the Soldier Meadows Allotment would continue to be excluded from grazing.

Massacre Ranch would be included in the Massacre Mountain Allotment and would be available for livestock grazing as part of a plan for the Massacre Mountain Allotment that includes specific objectives and actions for the meadows and grazing management facilities at the ranch.

Existing authorized structural rangeland projects would be maintained where beneficial to resource values. All spring developments would be modified where necessary to maintain, improve, or restore the biotic integrity of the spring system, in accordance with BLM Technical Reference 1737-17. These spring developments would also be modified to provide water for wildlife at ground level adjacent to the spring source. Projects no longer needed to meet

livestock or other resource management objectives could be removed and the sites restored.

Authorizations of grazing use including multiple use decisions and activity plans would incorporate specific grazing management prescriptions (covering, but not limited to, timing, duration, intensity, and frequency of livestock use) that an evaluation showed would provide the best opportunity to meet the objectives of the plan and the applicable Rangeland Health Standards.

Adjustments in livestock and/or wild horse and burro forage would be implemented in an equitable manner on the basis of monitoring data or site-specific resource evaluations. If monitoring data indicates that impacts on resources are occurring as a result of livestock, or wild horse or burro use, appropriate adjustments will be made to the specific class of use. In the absence of monitoring data, adjustments in available forage would be proportional to applicable livestock active animal unit months (AUM) and wild horse and burro AMLs.

2.4.10 WILD HORSES AND BURROS

2.4.10.1 Objectives

Objective 1: To maintain and manage sustainable populations of wild horses in seven herd management areas (HMA) and of wild horses and burros in two HMAs, consistent with the objectives of the NCA and Wilderness Zone, at AMLs that ensure a thriving ecological balance among wild horse and burro populations, wildlife, livestock, vegetation resources, and other resource values.

Objective 2: To maintain free roaming behavior of wild horses and burros.

2.4.10.2 Wild Horse and Burro Management

The HMAs referenced in Table 3-10 and shown on Map 3-6 are rangelands used by either wild horses or a combination of wild horses and burros. These HMAs were established following passage of the Wild Horse and Burro Act of 1971, on the basis of

herd areas. The HMAs would be retained and the wild horse or burro populations would be managed consistent with plan objectives.

The Antelope Range Herd Area, as shown on Map 3-6, would not be designated as an HMA because it does not meet HMA criteria.

Contiguous HMAs with documented reproductive interaction would be managed as complexes to enable better management of genetic traits for the population and increased coordination of monitoring and gathering.

No adjustments in HMA boundaries would occur as a consequence of this plan. However, if subsequent planning adjusted boundaries of HMAs partially contained in the planning area, those adjustments would also apply to this plan.

Horses and burros would be gathered from the HMAs to achieve the AML. Aircraft would continue to be used for the management and, when necessary, removal of wild horses and burros. Gather activities would be scheduled to avoid high visitor use periods whenever possible. The initial and estimated herd sizes that could be managed while still preserving a thriving natural ecological balance and managing multiple use relationships of wild horses and burros for each HMA are shown in Table 3-10.

Adjustments in livestock and/or wild horse and burro forage would be implemented in an equitable manner on the basis of monitoring data or site-specific resource evaluations. If monitoring data indicates that impacts on resources are occurring as a result of livestock, or wild horses or burros, appropriate adjustments will be made to the specific class of use. In the absence of monitoring data indicating impacts by a specific class of use, adjustments in available forage would be proportional to the applicable livestock AUMs and the wild horse and burro AMLs.

WP Gathers in Wilderness would continue to be conducted by herding the animals by helicopter or on horseback to temporary corrals, generally located outside of Wilderness. No landing of aircraft would occur in Wilderness Areas except for emergency purposes, and no motorized vehicles would be used in the Wilderness Area in association with the gather operations unless such use was consistent with the minimum tool requirement for management of Wilderness. **WP**

2.4.11 WILDLAND FIRE

2.4.11.1 Objectives

Objective 1: To provide an appropriate management response (AMR) to all wildland fires, with emphasis on firefighter and public safety, considering the resource values to be protected, consistent with overall management objectives and fire suppression costs.

Objective 2: To recognize fire as a natural process in vegetation change and to use fire to protect, maintain, and enhance resources in plant communities within the planning area where consistent with objectives.

2.4.11.2 Wildland Fire Management

Rehabilitation and restoration efforts would be conducted in areas burned by wildland fires and subject to invasion by annual plants (see Vegetation section, 2.5.6).

2.4.12 FISH AND WILDLIFE

2.4.12.1 Fish and Wildlife

2.4.12.1.1 Objectives

Objective 1: To provide habitat within the planning area to support a diverse range of game and nongame wildlife species and to give visitors high-quality opportunities to hunt, fish, trap, or view wildlife.

Objective 2: To maintain, restore, or enhance riparian areas and wetlands within the planning area, so that they provide diverse and healthy habitat conditions for riparian and wetland obligate species and other wildlife species.

Objective 3: To manage upland habitats in woodland and rangeland vegetation types to provide the forage, water, cover, structure, and security necessary for sustainable populations of shrubland and woodland obligate and other wildlife species.

Objective 4: To provide high-quality habitats for sagebrush-dependent species, including sage-grouse, in the sagebrush steppe portions of the planning area.

All existing lek, breeding, brood rearing, and winter sage-grouse habitats would be conserved during the life of the plan.

Objective 5: To provide habitat for migratory birds, including forage, water, cover, structure, and security, to support healthy populations of resident and migrant species.

Objective 6: To restore, maintain, or improve habitat to provide for diverse and self-sustaining communities of fish and other aquatic organisms in spring systems and streams throughout the planning area.

2.4.12.1.2 Fish and Wildlife Management

This plan would not diminish the jurisdiction of the State of Nevada with respect to fish and wildlife management, including regulation of hunting, trapping, and fishing on public land in the planning area.

BLM would work cooperatively with tribal governments and the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), recognizing their roles in the management of habitats and populations of fish and wildlife.

WP Trap and transplant activities associated with native wildlife species in Wilderness would be allowed if they were necessary to meet the minimum requirements for the administration of the Wilderness Areas. Use of gas- or electric-powered equipment and motorized vehicles, including aircraft, would be authorized in support of trap and transplant, or project development, activities when they were determined to be the minimum tools for implementing the project.

A WMP would be prepared following completion of this RMP. The WMP will contain specific objectives, management actions, and monitoring procedures for wildlife resources in the designated Wilderness Areas. The WMP will establish the type and level of environmental assessment necessary including minimum requirement and minimum tool analyses for all site-specific wildlife management actions. **W**

2.4.12.2 Fish and Wildlife Habitat

2.4.12.2.1 Objectives

Objective 1: To maintain High Rock Canyon, the South Jackson Range, and the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Area as Watchable Wildlife Sites.

Objective 2: To implement management actions for all uses and programs that sustain or improve sage-grouse winter, breeding, nesting, and brooding habitats. Activities that have a high risk of disturbing breeding or brooding sage-grouse would not be allowed within suitable habitats.

2.4.12.2.2 Fish and Wildlife Habitat Management

Use of aircraft to survey and monitor wildlife populations would be continued, but flights would be scheduled to avoid high-visitor-use periods.

LAW Any landing of aircraft or dropping of supplies from aircraft would be consistent with a minimum requirement and minimum tool analysis. **LAW**

Use of aircraft or mechanized equipment would be authorized for performance of emergency wildlife-related actions and for distribution of mineral or medicated blocks for wildlife. **WP** When these activities occur in Wilderness, they must be consistent with the minimum requirement and minimum tool analyses (Appendix F). **W**

Habitat rehabilitation and restoration projects and activities would be conducted in the planning area. **WP** When they are proposed for Wilderness, these activities must be consistent with the minimum requirement and minimum tool analyses (Appendix F). **W** Examples of such activities and projects include changes in authorized uses; seeding following fires to enhance recovery of wildlife habitats and prevent establishment and dominance of invasive, exotic plant species; and construction of riparian protective fencing to recover, establish, or enhance riparian systems.



WP Naturalized game birds would continue to be priority species for hunters in the Wilderness Areas, but no additional wildlife water developments or other habitat manipulations would be undertaken to manage naturalized game bird populations in Wilderness. **W**

2.4.13 SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES

2.4.13.1 Objective

To manage habitats and populations of special status plant taxa and animal species to meet the standards for “secure” ranking within 10 years. Any new listing would be managed under plan maintenance.

2.4.13.2 Special Status Species Management

 Actions and stipulations necessary to protect special status species and their habitats would be made part of land use authorizations. Specific actions intended to protect special status species are included in the Fish and Wildlife (section, 2.4.10), Vegetation (section, 2.5.6), and other sections of this chapter. The Endangered Species Act and the BLM Policy on Management of Special Status Species would guide development of actions and stipulations. For information on special status species conditions, refer to the Vegetation and the Fish and Wildlife sections in Chapter 3, section 3.6.3). 

2.4.14 VISUAL RESOURCES

2.4.14.1 Objectives

Objective 1: To provide a primitive and natural visual setting for visitors.

Objective 2: To protect the visual integrity of the emigrant trail corridor.

2.4.14.2 Visual Resource Management

The Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Wilderness Study Area would be managed as Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class I. If Congress releases the Wilderness Study Area from Wilderness consideration, the lands would be designated as VRM Class II.

Wilderness Areas would be designated as VRM Class I. VRM classification descriptions are provided in Appendix G.

2.4.15 WATER RESOURCES

2.4.15.1 Objectives

Objective 1: To manage the quality of water resources in the planning area in a way that achieves the chemical, physical, and biological integrity that each resource is capable of producing, consistent with Nevada Revised Statute chapter 445A.

Objective 2: To manage the use of water resources within the planning area to enhance the natural and cultural resource values that the NCA was created to protect, consistent with Nevada Revised Statute chapters 533–534.

2.4.15.2 Water Resource Management

2.4.15.2.1 Black Rock Range

The water quality of the Mahogany Creek, Summer Camp Creek, Pole Creek, Battle Creek, Colman Creek, and Snow Creek watersheds would be managed to meet the life history requirements of populations of Lahontan cutthroat trout (explained in Chapter 3, section 3.10.2).

The water quality of the Bartlett Creek and Paiute Creek watersheds would be managed to meet the life history requirements of the Lahontan cutthroat trout as potential recovery streams.

2.4.15.2.2 Calico Range

The water quality of the Donnelly Creek watershed would be managed to meet the life history requirements of the Lahontan cutthroat trout as a potential recovery stream.

2.4.15.2.3 Jackson Mountain Range

The water quality of the Jackson Creek watershed would be managed to meet the life history requirements of populations of the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout.

The water quality of the Happy Creek and Mary Sloan Creek watersheds would be managed to meet the life history requirements of the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout as potential recovery streams.

2.4.15.2.4 Soldier Meadows

The water quality of those areas within the Soldier Meadows Allotment that provide habitat for the desert dace (see Map 2-2) would be managed to meet the life history requirements of the desert dace and the springsnails (Soldier Meadows Activity Plan).

2.4.15.2.5 Remainder of the Planning Area (Other Watersheds)

With the exception of warm water springs, all water resources would be managed to achieve the State of Nevada's Class A standards. Where Class A standards cannot be achieved because of naturally occurring limitations, site-specific water quality objectives would be developed, consistent with the intent of the Act.

The water quality of geothermal springs in the planning area would be managed to maintain existing populations of native fish or other aquatic organisms. Activities and land use practices that would impact water quality to a degree that would cause harm to terrestrial or avian animals would not be allowed.

Permitted uses would be subject to Best Management Practice prescriptions, based on monitoring and evaluation, that would provide the best opportunity to meet the objectives of the plan and Land Health Standards related to water resources.

Best Management Practices would be regularly evaluated and updated to ensure that the most effective practices are being applied.

2.4.15.3 Water Rights

BLM would continue to file for water rights through the State of Nevada to support uses consistent with this plan that help to achieve resource management objectives and maintain healthy and functioning riparian and upland systems.

2.4.16 LANDS AND REALTY

2.4.16.1 Objectives



Objective 1: To provide access to private lands, consistent with applicable laws, while minimizing environmental impacts.

Objective 2: To establish utility corridors and grant rights-of-way when they are consistent with the management objectives of the NCA.

Objective 3: When practical and appropriate, to pursue opportunities within the planning area to acquire private parcels or interests from willing sellers who initiate the process.

Objective 4: To prevent development and establishment of new private interests on public lands that are inconsistent with the resource goals of the planning area.

2.4.16.2 Lands and Realty Management

 Access to private lands entirely surrounded by Wilderness (also known as inholdings) would be allowed for the reasonable purposes for which the property is held or used. Access would be limited to the routes and modes of travel that existed at the time of designation. When vehicle access is provided, it would be authorized through issuance of renewable land use permits. Until issuance of a land use permit, landowners would only be allowed to use nonmotorized and nonmechanical means of accessing their property. 

Access to private lands outside of Wilderness would be authorized by issuing rights-of-way that provided for the reasonable use and enjoyment of private lands by their owners while minimizing impacts on resources. (For access to Wilderness inholdings, see Constraints, Appendix A.)

No new utility corridors would be established in Wilderness Areas, the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Area, High Rock Canyon, and the Black Rock Desert Playa, and along the emigrant trail corridor.

Proposed utility rights-of-way could be granted, except as specifically excluded, where in conformance with the objectives and decisions of this plan, law, regulation, policy, and the intent of the legislation. Rights-of-way would be granted, outside of Wilderness, in support of valid existing rights.

As opportunities arise, BLM would continue to consider acquisition of private lands within the planning area or property interests that would provide public benefits. Land acquisitions would be considered through exchange, where no disposal of public land would occur within the NCA or Wilderness; through purchase from willing landowners or their agents, or through donation.

BLM would continue to acquire private lands from willing sellers through previously initiated land exchanges. These initiated exchanges are as follows:

- Near Rye Patch Reservoir along the southeastern corridor of the NCA in Township 33N, Range 30E and Township 33N, Range 31E
- Near High Rock Lake in Township 38N, Range 24E; Township 39N, Range 24E; and Township 39N, Range 23E.



Recreation and public purposes leases and Section 302 leases would not be issued within the planning area.

2.4.17 MINERAL RESOURCES



2.4.17.1 Objective

To recognize valid, existing rights and allow development and establishment of property interests in the planning area, consistent with the resource goals of this plan.

2.4.17.2 Locatable Minerals Management



 Subject to valid existing rights, Federal lands within the NCA and designated Wilderness Areas are withdrawn from location, entry, and patent under the 1872 General Mining Law. Valid existing rights for existing mining claims would be determined. Claims found to be valid would be allowed to continue operations and would be managed under applicable laws and regulations. 

2.4.17.3 Leasable Minerals Management

 Federal lands within the NCA and designated Wilderness Areas are withdrawn from the authority of the 1970 Geothermal Steam Act and the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920. 

The South Playa Area would be closed to sodium/potassium leasing and development. Existing geothermal leases in the South Playa Area would be administered under the terms of the lease and applicable laws and regulations. The existing geothermal leases would be extended for: 1) five years if drilling over the end of the primary lease term (10 years) or production of byproducts occurs, 2) up to two 5-year periods if diligent development occurs, and 3) for as long as unit commitment occurs. If geothermal resources are produced, or are capable of being produced in commercial quantities, the lease will be placed in additional term for 40 years from the end of the primary period, as long as production continues. If at the end of the additional term, the land is not needed for other purposes and production is ongoing, the lessee would have a preferential right to renew the lease for an additional 40-year period under the terms and conditions applied.

2.4.17.4 Salable Minerals Management

 Within the NCA, the Secretary could permit the use of gravel pits for the maintenance of roads under the terms of the Mineral Materials Act of 1947, to the extent consistent with the Act, as amended, and subject to such regulations, policies, and practices as the Secretary considers necessary. Subject to valid existing rights, Wilderness Areas are withdrawn from the Mineral Materials Act. 

2.4.18 SOILS

No decisions addressing soils are directly contained in this plan. Soils would continue to be managed in accordance with existing laws, regulations, and policies, as documented in Appendix A.

2.4.19 RECREATION

2.4.19.1 Objectives

Objective 1: To provide opportunities for a diverse range of recreation experiences and permitted events, consistent with the intent of the Act.

Objective 2: To protect the physical and visual integrity of the Applegate-Lassen National Historic Trail from impacts associated with human uses, including organized events.

Objective 3: To maintain access across the playa, while retaining a sense of isolation.

Objective 4: To provide suitable alternatives to traditional camping areas to reduce resource conflicts, rehabilitate sensitive areas, and reduce visitor conflict.

2.4.19.2 Recreation Management

The entire planning area would be administered as a Special Recreation Management Area.

Where resource impacts occur as a result of recreation activities, specific restrictions on recreational activities could be applied. Camping would be restricted to areas more than 300 feet from springs, consistent with Nevada Revised Statute 503.660, unless otherwise designated.

Open fires would be allowed in accordance with local fire restrictions. Fires would use only dead and down wood, or firewood brought in from outside of the planning area. Fires on the playa would be allowed only with the use of a surface-protecting device, such as an elevated platform, open grill, fire blanket, or fire pan.

BLM would work cooperatively with the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW), recognizing its jurisdiction in the management of hunting, trapping, and fishing. All hunting, trapping, and fishing activities within the planning area would be managed by NDOW in accordance with state regulations.

2.4.19.3 Special Recreation Permits

All recreation permittees would be required to adhere to Leave-No-Trace[®] principles (See

Glossary). Permits would emphasize the Leave-No-Trace[®] principles.

2.4.20 PUBLIC OUTREACH AND VISITOR SERVICES

2.4.20.1 Objectives

Objective 1: To provide the public with a better understanding and appreciation of the area's natural, cultural, and biological resources and its history and uses.

Objective 2: To expand public awareness of the ethics of responsible land and resource use.

Objective 3: To build and maintain positive relationships with communities.

Objective 4: To encourage development of visitor services and facilities on private lands, or on public and tribal lands outside of the planning area, to enhance visitor experiences, foster economic development, and protect area resources.

Objective 5: To expand public awareness of the dangers and hazards in the area while stressing the need for self-reliance and personal safety.

Objective 6: To develop an outreach and interpretive plan for the NCA and Wilderness Areas.

2.4.20.2 Public Outreach and Visitor Services Management

BLM would expand public awareness by implementing and supporting programs that would increase public appreciation for the values of the planning area. In addition, volunteers would be recruited to develop and implement interpretive and environmental programs.

BLM's outreach and interpretive plan would identify the types of information to be provided to visitors; locations and techniques for distribution; and a monitoring process for evaluation and revision of materials and distribution techniques. The plan would also establish guidelines for the location and construction of potential brochure stations, signs, or small kiosks. The distribution, size, placement, and use of facilities would vary among alternatives, but would always be designed to cause the smallest

possible impact on the ground inside the planning area.

Potential types of information and formats could include:

- Maps
- Brochures
- Internet sites
- Partnership programs
- Resource and cultural site stewardship
- Day and evening programs
- Interpretive displays
- Teacher reference materials
- Field trip programs
- Outreach strategies for local communities
- Signing
- Kiosks
- Volunteer programs
- Museum displays
- Visitor center programs and displays
- Materials supporting heritage tourism
- Low power radio transmission systems.

Information would be made available to visitors outside of the NCA to raise awareness of the values, uses, and hazards of the area. Informational materials would be available at offsite locations, including gateway communities, and online at BLM and private Web sites or other outlets. Informational materials would emphasize visitor risks and safety; respect for private property, natural resources, wilderness values, and cultural and historic trail resources of the area; and regulatory information related to BLM and other agencies. Maps and narrative information would be provided to potential visitors.

BLM would foster the development of resource stewardship programs (See Appendix M). It would also encourage scientific research into resources and uses that occur within the NCA and Wilderness.

2.5 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

(Continuation of Present Management)

The No Action Alternative is defined as the continuation of present management decisions. These decisions consist of the new decisions established in the Act, as amended; those decisions contained in the land use plans in effect at the time of the NCA designation that were not affected by the Act; and those decisions that were modified by the Act.

For purposes of clarity, the presentation of the No Action Alternative in the plan is a simplification of existing management decisions. Because of the complexity of combining actions from the four existing land use plans, the decisions presented in this text are summaries. In many program areas, decisions vary among the four plans. In addition, many decisions contained in the existing plans do not apply to lands within the NCA planning area. Decisions from the four existing land use plans that do apply to the NCA planning area are listed in Appendix H. Ongoing management of the planning area is based on these decisions, guidance such as Rangeland Health Standards, and the requirements of the Act.

In addition to those elements listed in Section 2.5 (Management Guidance Common to All Alternatives), the No Action Alternative contains management actions that either appear only in the No Action Alternative or are present in one or more (but not all) of the other action alternatives.

2.5.1 LAND HEALTH STANDARDS

No additional management is identified for this alternative.

2.5.2 TRANSPORTATION AND OHV ROUTES

2.5.2.1 Functional Classes



BLM system roads would be assigned to one of four functional categories and managed accordingly. These roads (shown on Map 2-3) also would be assigned appropriate maintenance levels, consistent with their functional classification (described in Appendix D).

Table 2-1. BLM System Roads and Other Routes (No Action Alternative)

Road Number	Road Name	Maintenance Level
Collector Roads		
2048	High Road	4
2054	High Rock Lake	2
Resource Roads		
2049	Sulphur Jackson	2
2051	Pahute Meadow	2
2052	Bartlett Butte	2
2053	Cane Spring	2
2055	Rock Spring	2
2070	Pole Creek West	2
2077	Cow Creek-	3
2086	Rabbithole	2
2088	Donnelly	2
2094	Playa Access	3
37003	Little Basin	2
37005	Frank's	2
37006	Wall Canyon	2
37012	Weimer	2
37015	Sand Spring	2
37017	Stevens Camp	3
37022	Woodruff	2
37024	Docking Corral	2
37032	Grassy	2
37035	Wildcat	2
	Cholona Playa	3
	Access	3
	Trego Playa	3
	Access	
	Garrett Playa	
	Access	
Trail		
37002	High Rock	
Routes	All other vehicle routes, including wilderness access routes	No maintenance

See Map 2-3 for locations of roads and routes.

2.5.2.2 OHV Designations

 Wilderness Areas would be closed to OHV use.  Use in High Rock Canyon and the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Wilderness Study Area would be limited to existing routes. The remainder of the planning area would be open (see Maps 2-4a,b,c,d).

2.5.2.3 Directional Signage

Directional signs would be used at some major road intersections.

2.5.3 CULTURAL RESOURCES, INCLUDING EMIGRANT TRAILS

Cultural resource management would be limited to inventories and mitigation needed for specific projects, in compliance with Federal laws and regulations, as referenced in Section 2.3, Constraints and Goals.

2.5.4 NATIVE AMERICAN VALUES



Native American consultation would be conducted as needed for specific projects, in compliance with Federal laws and regulations.

2.5.5 PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

No additional management is identified for this alternative.

2.5.6 WILDERNESS

2.5.6.1 Wilderness Areas

 Wilderness Area boundaries would be signed at approximately 1-mile intervals along appropriate boundary roads. Boundaries along other features (topography, point to point, etc.) would be signed on an as needed basis. 

2.5.6.2 Wilderness Study Area Designations

The Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Wilderness Study Area would be recommended as unsuitable for Wilderness designation, as stated in the Nevada BLM Statewide Wilderness Report Record of Decision (ROD), dated October 1991. This recommendation will stand before Congress until Congress either designates the Wilderness Study Area as Wilderness or releases it for other purposes. None of the 10 parcels within the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Wilderness Study Area that were acquired and inventoried for wilderness characteristics (1,092 acres) would be added to the Wilderness Study Area under this alternative.

2.5.7 SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS

2.5.7.1 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

2.5.7.1.1 High Rock Canyon ACEC

The existing 24,006-acre ACEC (Maps 2-5 a,b) would be maintained. The management goal would be to retain the important primitive, scenic, wildlife, cultural, and riparian values of the area.

The High Rock Canyon Road would be closed to vehicles from February 15 through March 31 each year to prevent damage to the emigrant trail and reduce human disturbance of wildlife.

2.5.7.1.2 Soldier Meadows ACEC

The existing 307-acre Soldier Meadows ACEC (Maps 2-5 a,b) would be maintained to preserve the unique combination of natural and cultural resources within this area. Management recommendations stated in the Soldier Meadows Activity Plan would be implemented, consistent with the Act.

2.5.7.2 Wild and Scenic Rivers

Of the 16 river segments found eligible for Wild and Scenic River status designation, no streams

would be recommended as suitable for such designation.

2.5.8 VEGETATION

Vegetation management decisions for the No Action Alternative are listed in the Common to All section. Ongoing management of the vegetation resource is designed to comply with Rangeland Health Standards and the intent of the Act, because there is no consistent direction for vegetation management in the four existing land use plans. (Management decisions from the four land use plans are provided in Appendix H.)

2.5.9 LIVESTOCK GRAZING

Grazing management decisions for the No Action Alternative are listed in the Common to All section. Ongoing management of the grazing resource is designed to comply with Rangeland Health Standards and the intent of the Act, because there is no consistent direction for grazing management in the four existing land use plans. Management decisions from the four land use plans are provided in Appendix H. Livestock grazing would also continue to be managed in accordance with current multiple use decisions and allotment plans.

2.5.10 WILD HORSES AND BURROS

No additional management is identified for this alternative.

2.5.11 WILDLAND FIRE

Currently, wildland fire management in the planning area is divided among four areas with different appropriate management responses assigned to each. These appropriate management responses range from aggressive initial attack and full

suppression action to manipulation of unprescribed fire to meet resource objectives (see Map 2-6).

In addition to the wildland fire management actions described under the Common to All section, initial suppression efforts would generally be conducted by BLM from its Winnemucca or Cedarville office, and as directed by mutual aid agreements. **WP** In Wilderness, management decisions concerning wildfire suppression and prescribed burns would be based on existing fire management plans, laws, regulations, and policies, in accordance with the minimum tool standard. **W**

2.5.12 FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife and wildlife habitat management decisions for the No Action Alternative are listed in the Common to All section. Ongoing management of wildlife habitat is designed to comply with Rangeland Health Standards and the intent of the Act, because there is no consistent direction for wildlife habitat management in the four existing land use plans. (Management decisions from the four land use plans are provided in Appendix H.)

2.5.12.1 Fish and Wildlife Management

No additional management is identified for this alternative.

2.5.12.2 Fish and Wildlife Habitat

Vegetation manipulation projects would be allowed in accordance with the BLM Interagency Sage-grouse Guidelines.

WP Existing wildlife water developments would continue to be maintained in the following Wilderness Areas: five in High Rock Lake, one in Calico Mountains, five in North Black Rock Range, one in North Jackson Mountains, and three in Pahute Peak. **W**

2.5.13 SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES

No additional management is identified for this alternative.

2.5.14 VISUAL RESOURCES

VRM class designations are shown on Map 2-7.

The playa of the Black Rock Desert, an area along the west side of the Black Rock Range and the High Rock Canyon corridor, would be designated as VRM Class II.

The remaining portions of the planning area would be designated as VRM Class IV.

2.5.15 WATER RESOURCES

No additional management is identified for this alternative.

2.5.16 LANDS AND REALTY

Two existing utility corridors would be retained. One corridor would be parallel to the existing Los Angeles Department of Water and Power 1,000-kilovolt power line through the northwestern portion of the NCA. A second corridor would parallel the Union Pacific Railroad tracks. This second corridor would have a total width of 3 miles, with one-quarter mile north of the track restricted to buried facilities and two and three-quarters miles south of the track without restrictions (see Map 2-8).

Rights-of-way for aboveground utilities would not be granted on the Black Rock Desert Playa north of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks.

Rights-of-way in other portions of the planning area outside of Wilderness Areas would be considered and granted on a case-by-case basis under existing regulations.

Non-access land use permits, such as film permits, would be issued on a case-by-case basis.

2.5.17 MINERAL RESOURCES

2.5.17.1 Locatable Minerals Management

A major portion of the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Area would remain closed to location, entry, and patent under the mining laws, pursuant to the Classification and Multiple-Use (C&MU) Act of May 1968, as shown on Map 2-9. Valid existing rights for mining claims within the C&MU classification have been determined under the authority of the 1872 General Mining Law and the C&MU Act. Federal lands outside of the C&MU classification and the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Wilderness Study Area would be managed under the authority of the 1872 General Mining Law and other applicable laws and regulations.

Federal lands in the South Playa Area, and routes outside the NCA (shown on Map 2-9) would be open to location, entry, and patent under the mining laws and managed under authority of the 1872 General Mining Law and other applicable laws and regulations.

2.5.17.2 Leasable Minerals Management

No leases would be issued in the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Wilderness Study Area. Federal lands in the sliver of BLM-managed public lands between the Wilderness Study Area and the Summit Lake Paiute Indian Reservation (see Map 2-10) would be administered under applicable laws and regulations.

Federal lands along the routes adjacent to the Wilderness Areas, as shown on Map 2-10, would be managed under applicable laws and regulations.

Federal lands within the South Playa Area would be open to development of all leasable minerals except sodium and potassium. The remaining leasable minerals would be managed under applicable laws and regulations.

2.5.17.3 Salable Minerals Management

The Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Wilderness Study Area would remain closed to mineral entry (See Map 2-11). Federal lands in the sliver of the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Area would be administered under applicable laws and regulations. Federal lands within the South Playa Area and Wilderness Routes outside of the NCA would be managed under authority of the Mineral Materials Act of 1947 and applicable regulations. Materials site rights-of-way would be granted to the Nevada Department of Transportation under Title 23, Section 317 of the U.S. Code.

2.5.18 RECREATION

2.5.18.1 Recreation Management

All facilities within the planning area would be designed to be unobtrusive and aesthetically compatible with the location's setting.

Permits would not be required for casual use within the planning area.

Overnight camping would be allowed throughout the planning area, including Wilderness Areas, per BLM guidelines. Camping would be limited to 14 days within any 25-mile-radius area within a 28-day period, unless otherwise authorized, according to Nevada BLM policy (*Federal Register* 58-191, October 5, 1993).

Legal and noncommercial rock collection using nonmotorized hand tools and causing minimal surface disturbance would be allowed without permit. Collection of petrified wood would be limited to 25 pounds per day plus one piece, with a maximum collection of 250 pounds per year.

2.5.18.2 Special Recreation Permits

The permit evaluation process would consider the nature of the event, potential impacts on resources, conflicts with other events, and impacts on the quality of other visitors' experiences.


Any requests in special recreation permit applications to remove natural resources would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and through a NEPA process.

2.5.19 PUBLIC OUTREACH AND VISITOR SERVICES

A roadside trailer-based visitor contact station would be provided at peak use times in the vicinity of Gerlach. A visitor information kiosk also would be maintained in Gerlach.

Volunteers or BLM staff would introduce and orient visitors to back-country use ethics.

Maps and brochures would be distributed at BLM offices, at the visitor contact station, by volunteers, and through private businesses.

 No onsite outreach, interpretive, or regulatory information would be provided in Wilderness, except as required to protect resources.



2.6 ALTERNATIVE A

(Emphasis on Natural Processes)

2.6.1 LAND HEALTH STANDARDS

In this section and the other action alternative sections of this plan, the Rangeland Health Standards described in Section 2.4.1 are referred to as Land Health Standards to indicate that they apply to more than livestock grazing.

Land Health Standards developed by the Sierra Front–Northwest Great Basin Resource Advisory Council would apply to all uses and programs in the portions of the planning unit under the jurisdiction of the Winnemucca Field Office.

Land Health Standards developed by the Northeastern California Resource Advisory Council would apply to all uses and programs in the portions of the planning unit under the jurisdiction of the Surprise Field Office.

These standards are contained in Appendix C.

2.6.2 TRANSPORTATION AND OHV ROUTES

2.6.2.1 Functional Classes

Each road segment would be assigned to one of four functional categories and a corresponding maintenance category. Appendix D describes these functional and maintenance categories.

Table 2-2. BLM System Roads and Other Designated Routes (Alternative A)

Road Number	Road Name	Maintenance Level
Collector Roads		
2048	High Road	4
Resource Roads		
2049	Sulphur Jackson	2
2051	Pahute Meadow	2
2052	Bartlett Butte	2
2053	Cane Spring	2
2054	High Rock Lake	2
2055	Rock Spring	2
2070	Pole Creek West	2
2077	Cow Creek-	3
2086	Rabbithole	2
2088	Donnelly	2
2094	Playa Access	3
37002	High Rock	2
37003	Little Basin	2
37005	Frank's	2
37006	Wall Canyon	2
37012	Weimer	2
37015	Sand Spring	2
37017	Stevens Camp	3
37022	Woodruff	2
37024	Docking Corral	2
37032	Grassy	2
37035	Wildcat	2
	Cholona Playa	3
	Access	3
	Trego Playa	3
	Access	
	Garrett Playa	
	Access	
Designated Routes	All other vehicle routes, including wilderness access routes	No maintenance

See Map 2-12 for locations of roads and routes.

If vehicle use on any road or route causes damage to resources, the appropriate functional classification or maintenance level would be designated on the basis of an evaluation of all options.

Designated routes receiving vehicle use in excess of capacity could be downgraded in quality for the purpose of decreasing vehicle use.

Where public roads cross private property, BLM would attempt to acquire public access easements or develop road alignments that avoided private property.

2.6.2.2 OHV Designations

Vehicle use, including OHV use, would be managed by designating three use levels to cover the planning area (see Maps 2-13a,b,c,d). These would include:

- Areas that are open to vehicle use (122,905 acres)
- Areas that are closed to vehicle use (751,879 acres)
- Areas where vehicle use is limited to designated routes (346,191 acres).

The three use-level areas are shown on Map 2-13a,b,c,d. Wilderness Areas would be closed. A designated portion of the playa (not including the dunes) would be open. Vehicle use, including OHV use, in the remainder of the planning area would be limited to those BLM system roads and designated routes shown on Map 2-13a,b,c,d

2.6.2.3 Directional Signage

Existing directional signs would be maintained. New signs would be added where monitoring indicates a need to prevent resource damage or visitor confusion.

2.6.3 CULTURAL RESOURCES, INCLUDING EMIGRANT TRAILS

Cultural resource sites would be identified by site type and placed into appropriate cultural resource use categories, as defined in Appendix I. Site conservation would be emphasized.

2.6.4 NATIVE AMERICAN VALUES



Properties of Cultural and Religious Importance would be managed under the Traditional Use category, as defined in Appendix I. Uses that are consistent with the resource objectives for that area and that do not interfere with the sustainability of the resources would be allowed.

2.6.5 PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Paleontological sites would be identified by site type and placed into appropriate paleontological use categories, as defined in Appendix I. The emphasis under Alternative A would be on conservation, with some scientific use allowed. Collection of petrified wood and common invertebrate fossils would be prohibited except for scientific purposes with a permit.

2.6.6 WILDERNESS

2.6.6.1 Wilderness Areas

 Wilderness boundaries would be signed at approximately half-mile intervals along boundary roads and at 1-mile intervals along other sections of boundary. Line of sight signing would also occur in areas that have continuing problems with motorized trespass. 

2.6.6.2 Wilderness Study Area Designations

All 10 of the parcels within the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Area that were acquired and inventoried for wilderness characteristics (1,092 acres), would be added to the Wilderness Study Area and managed under the Interim Management Policy. Two BLM system roads, the main Bartlett Butte Road (#2052) and the Pole Creek West Road (#2070)

would not be included in the Wilderness Study Area. (see Map 2-23).

The Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Area would be seasonally closed to motor vehicles during the spawning season of the Lahontan cutthroat trout (February–June).

2.6.7 SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS

2.6.7.1 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

2.6.7.1.1 High Rock Canyon ACEC

The existing 24,006-acre ACEC would be maintained. Special management actions would include:

- No camping would be allowed within the High Rock Canyon portion of the ACEC. Elsewhere in the ACEC, camping would be allowed at designated sites.
- No rock climbing would be allowed adjacent to the emigrant trail, to protect the resources in the canyon.
- Portions of the ACEC in High Rock, Little High Rock, East Fork, Mahogany, Grassy, and Yellow Rock Canyons would be closed to visitor use from January 31 through May 15 each year to prevent damage to the emigrant trail and to reduce human disturbance of wildlife, including disturbance of bighorn sheep lambing and raptor nesting.

2.6.7.1.2 Soldier Meadows ACEC

The existing ACEC would be increased to approximately 3,770 acres to include public land portions of all critical and occupied desert dace habitat, all basalt cinquefoil populations, habitat for four springsnails found only in the Soldier Meadows area, and important cultural resource values. Special management actions would include:

- No camping would be allowed within the ACEC.

- The existing hot spring access road would be rerouted away from sensitive resources. All spur roads from the access road would be closed (Map 2-14b).
- Springs and streams would be managed to minimize human use impacts on desert dace.
- The ACEC (Map 2-14a) would be fenced to provide for more manageable livestock grazing, and wild horse and recreation uses.
- Grazing by livestock would be permitted within the fenced portions of the ACEC when consistent with the recovery of the rare and listed species within the ACEC.
- Wild horse use would not be allowed in the fenced portion of the ACEC.

2.6.7.2 Wild and Scenic Rivers

Sixteen stream segments (137.3 miles) found to be eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation would be recommended as suitable for such designation (see Map 2-15). Appendix J provides further details on the Wild and Scenic River findings.

2.6.8 VEGETATION

Management would maintain or establish diversity mosaics and connectivity of upland communities at multiple scales across the landscape. Management would include a variety of methods to increase or decrease sagebrush overstories to meet site-specific resource objectives.

Vegetation manipulation projects would be implemented primarily to move plant communities toward desired conditions, improve structural and species diversity, and protect soil and water resources.



The frequency, distribution, and ecological function of stands of mountain shrubs would be restored to stable conditions, then maintained consistent with site potential and other management objectives.

Site-specific prescriptions would be created for restoration and maintenance of individual aspen stands to achieve the objectives.

On portions of rangelands that are currently dominated by monoculture stands of annual grasses, where the likelihood of restoration is high, habitat

complexity and structure would be restored through seeding.

Mature sagebrush cover would be retained on sage-grouse habitats unless site-specific analysis shows that alteration of shrub cover would increase habitat values for sage-grouse and other sagebrush-dependent wildlife species.

 Vegetation treatments would not be applied in Wilderness Areas, except for treatment of noxious weeds. 

2.6.9 LIVESTOCK GRAZING

The Stanley Camp Pasture within the Soldier Meadows Allotment would be excluded from livestock grazing or trailing. Grazing by livestock would be permitted within the fenced portions of the Soldier Meadows ACEC when consistent with the recovery of the rare and listed species within the ACEC.

2.6.10 WILD HORSES AND BURROS

No additional management is identified for this alternative.

2.6.11 WILDLAND FIRE

All of the planning area would be placed in one of two management categories with a corresponding Appropriate Management Responses based on the criteria in Appendix K. As shown in Map 2-16, 7,892 acres would be designated for an appropriate management response to wildland fire as described in Appendix K for Category A; 1,214,514 acres would be designated for an appropriate management response to wildland fire as described in Appendix K for Category B.

The updated fire management plan would refine the selected appropriate management response categories by geographic area and define applicable special requirements for fire suppression. The updated plan would be maintained based on changes in technology, policy, scientific knowledge, and other factors.

Category A areas would be associated with private lands, BLM facilities, and other areas where fire would not be desired. In Category B areas, a variety of appropriate fire suppression techniques would be applied to meet the resource objectives specified in this plan and other site-specific activity plans. The updated fire management plans could be used to further subdivide Category B areas to better meet site-specific resource objectives or fire management needs.



Prescribed fire and mechanical treatment of vegetation, where applicable to achieve resource objectives, would be used in both Category A and Category B lands outside of Wilderness.

Suppression efforts would be managed to contain wildland fires in Category A areas to less than 100 acres 90 percent of the time. For human-caused fires, suppression efforts would be managed to contain fires to less than 50 acres 90 percent of the time.

In all wildland fire situations, priority would be given to placing resources capable of initiating aggressive suppression in a position to evaluate the fire using the criteria contained in Appendix K to determine the best response for local conditions.

Minimum impact suppression techniques would be used throughout the area (see Appendix F). Use of heavy, surface-disturbing equipment would be limited and would require prior approval by the field manager to protect public and firefighter safety, private property, and other resources. Plans to provide appropriate fire suppression resources in or near the planning area for initial attack would be updated to allow achievement of the objectives and specific decisions in this section.

Outside of Wilderness, prescribed fire would be used on a site-specific basis to accomplish local small-scale projects consistent with the vegetation objectives. Low-surface-disturbance mechanical treatments, consistent with vegetation objectives, would be the preferred means of fuel reduction.

 No prescribed fire would be used in Wilderness Areas. 

2.6.12 FISH AND WILDLIFE

2.6.12.1 Fish and Wildlife Management

WP Existing wildlife water developments in Wilderness Areas would not be maintained and would be removed when they became non-functional.

Construction of new wildlife water developments would not be allowed.

Animal damage control by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services would not be allowed in Wilderness. **W**

2.6.12.2 Fish and Wildlife Habitat

Management of sage-grouse habitats would comply with the recommendations of the Nevada Governor and local plans from the Washoe-Modoc and North Central sage-grouse local working groups for recovery of sage-grouse populations.

2.6.13 SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES

No additional management is identified for this alternative.

2.6.14 VISUAL RESOURCES

The South Playa Area would be VRM Class III. The remaining portions of the planning area (excluding Wilderness Areas and the Wilderness Study Area, which are Class I) would be VRM Class II (Map 2-17).

2.6.15 WATER RESOURCES

No additional management is identified for this alternative.

2.6.16 LANDS AND REALTY

Two existing utility corridors, but not existing utilities, would be eliminated.

Rights-of-way for utilities would be granted only in the non-Wilderness portion of the planning area, for access to private lands, and in support of valid existing rights (See Map 2-18).

Land use permits, such as filming permits, would be issued consistent with the guidelines for special recreation permits, as discussed in Section 2.7.16 (Recreation).

2.6.17 MINERAL RESOURCES

2.6.17.1 Locatable Minerals Management

Subject to valid existing rights, Federal lands within the South Playa Area, the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Area, and vehicle access routes outside the NCA, as shown on Map 2-19, would be withdrawn from location, entry, and patent under the 1872 General Mining Law and other applicable laws and regulations.

2.6.17.2 Leasable Minerals Management

Subject to the terms of existing leases, Federal lands within the South Playa Area, the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Area and vehicle access routes outside the NCA, but within the planning area, as shown on Map 2-20, would be withdrawn from the mineral leasing laws.

2.6.17.3 Salable Minerals Management

Subject to valid existing rights, Federal lands within the South Playa Area, the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Area, and vehicle access routes outside the NCA, as shown on Map 2-21, would be withdrawn from the Mineral Materials Act.

2.6.18 RECREATION

2.6.18.1 All Zones

Where resource impacts would occur as a result of camping, specific restrictions on camping would be applied. In Front Country, Rustic, and, where feasible, in Wilderness Zones, camping would be restricted to areas more than 200 feet from water, unless otherwise designated.


No facilities would be developed. Existing structures could be removed, unless they have been determined to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. In areas or sites where visitation is causing resource damage, user conflict, or crowding at attraction areas, a permit system might be implemented to manage use.

The development of privately operated campgrounds would be encouraged on public lands outside of the NCA and on private lands both inside and outside the NCA boundaries.

No recreational or commercial collection of rocks, minerals, common invertebrate fossils, or petrified wood would be allowed. Collection for scientific use would be authorized under permit.

If monitoring determines that human use is degrading specific resources, nonmotorized trails would be constructed, relocated, or closed to mitigate human-caused impacts.

2.6.18.2 Wilderness Zone

 Approximately 765,000 acres would be managed for wilderness visitor experiences, as shown on Map 2-23.

Limits on group size would be implemented to minimize the impact that large groups could have on the experience of other wilderness visitors and on the physical environment and naturalness of the areas. Groups would be limited to 15 humans and stock combined (i.e., 10 humans and 5 stock, 7 and 8, etc.).



2.6.18.3 Rustic Zone

As shown on Map 2-23, 332,630 acres would be managed for rustic visitor experiences.

Dispersed camping would be allowed throughout this zone except within one-half mile of designated campsites. If monitoring shows resource impacts in an area, specific sites would be designated for camping.

The following areas containing sensitive resources would be designated as day-use only:

- Portions of High Rock Canyon ACEC outside of Wilderness
- Soldier Meadows ACEC
- Class A and B historic trail segments
- Rustic portions of the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Area, excluding the sliver of BLM land between the WSA and the Summit Lake Paiute Reservation.

(See Map 2-22 for locations.)

Groups traveling with more than three vehicles would be required to camp in BLM-designated group camp areas. These would be primitive campsites identified by a small sign or other means in areas suitable for large groups.

Camping at designated sites would be limited to 10 days.

2.6.18.4 Front Country Zone

As shown on Map 2-23, 122,905 acres would be managed for front country visitor experiences.

Dispersed camping would be allowed on the playa. Dune and hummock areas bordering the playa would be closed to camping for the protection of sensitive soils, vegetation, and critical wildlife habitat.

Groups traveling with more than 10 vehicles would be required to camp in BLM-designated group camp areas. These would be primitive campsites identified by a small sign or other means in areas suitable for large groups.

Camping at designated sites would be limited to 10 days

2.6.18.5 Special Recreation Permit Events

A comprehensive permitting process for organized recreation events and other permitted activities would be developed, based on a classification system for events of similar scale and potential impacts. This process would streamline permit issuance; set standards for when permits are

required; and support resource, visitor experience, and other management objectives. Permits would be assigned to one of four classes of events (I through IV). A detailed outline of the classification system is provided in Appendix L.

- Class I events would be permitted throughout the planning area and would not require public closure areas.
- Class II events would be permitted in the Front Country and Rustic Zones, except for those events requiring public closure areas. Class II events that require closure of public areas would be permitted within a designated area of the Front Country playa, shown on Map 2-24. The number of Class II events would not be limited except when proposed closure areas would overlap.
- Class III events would be permitted within a designated area of the Front Country Zone, shown on Map 2-24, and along the emigrant trail for tours that are compatible with the objectives for the historic trails.
- Class IV events would be permitted in the Front Country Zone as shown on Map 2-24.

Class III and IV events would be permitted on four weekends between and including the Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends. During the rest of the year, Class III and IV events would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

An area of the playa, shown on Map 2-24, would be available for Class III and IV events. A rocket launch area would be designated, as shown on Map 2-24, away from main travel corridors and high-visitor-use areas.



Only one Class III or IV event could occur at a time.

Only one access point to the playa would be closed in conjunction with Class III and IV events.

Gerlach. A visitor information kiosk also would be maintained in Gerlach.

Interpretive information would be available in several existing, cooperatively managed visitor centers and kiosks outside the NCA.

2.6.19.2 Wilderness Zone

 No onsite outreach, interpretive, or regulatory information would be provided, except when necessary to protect resources. 

2.6.19.3 Rustic Zone

No onsite interpretation would be provided in the Rustic Zone. Existing interpretation signs would be removed.

Self-guided tours based on maps and brochures would be used to stimulate learning through self-discovery.

2.6.19.4 Front Country Zone

No onsite interpretation would be provided in the Front Country Zone.

Self-guided tours based on maps and brochures would be used to stimulate learning through self-discovery.

2.6.19 PUBLIC OUTREACH AND VISITOR SERVICES

2.6.19.1 All Zones

A roadside trailer-based visitor contact station would be provided at peak use times in the vicinity of

2.7 ALTERNATIVE B (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)

(Emphasis on Response to Change)

2.7.1 LAND HEALTH STANDARDS

Management actions would be the same as Alternative A.

2.7.2 TRANSPORTATION AND OHV ROUTES

2.7.2.1 Functional Classes

Each road segment would be assigned to one of four functional categories with a corresponding maintenance category. Appendix D contains descriptions of functional and maintenance categories.

Table 2-3. BLM System Roads and Other Designated Routes (Alternative B)

Road Number	Road Name	Maintenance Level
Collector Roads		
2048	High Road	4
Local Roads		
37017	Stevens Camp	3
Resource Roads		
2049	Sulphur Jackson	3
2051	Pahute Meadow	2
2052	Bartlett Butte	2
2053	Cane Spring	2
2054	High Rock Lake	2
2055	Rock Spring	2
2070	Pole Creek West	2
2077	Cow Creek-	3
2086	Rabbithole	2
2088	Donnelly	2
2094	Playa Access	3
37002	High Rock	2
37003	Little Basin	2
37005	Frank's	2
37006	Wall Canyon	2
37012	Weimer	2
37015	Sand Spring	2
37017	Stevens Camp	3
37022	Woodruff	2
37024	Docking Corral	2
37032	Grassy	2
37035	Wildcat	2
	Cholona Playa	3
	Access	3
	Trego Playa	3
	Access	
	Garrett Playa	
	Access	
Designated Routes	All other vehicle routes, including wilderness access routes	No maintenance

See Map 2-25 for locations of roads and routes.

Functional classification or maintenance levels of BLM system roads or designated routes could be changed following an evaluation of vehicle use and resource issues. The evaluation could conclude (1) that the road should be upgraded in functional classification or maintenance level; (2) that other measures could be implemented that would resolve

resource or safety issues; or (3) that no action would occur.

Where public roads cross private property, BLM would attempt to acquire public access easements or develop road alignments that avoid the private property.

Public access on the east side of the Black Rock Range from Humboldt County Road 214 would be developed to provide north-south access to Black Rock Point and east-west access to BLM Road #2051 (Pahute Meadow Road).

2.7.2.2 OHV Designations

Vehicle use, including OHV use, would be managed by designating three use levels to cover the planning area. These would include:

- Areas that are open to vehicle use (122,905 acres)
- Areas that are closed to vehicle use (751,879 acres)
- Areas where vehicle use is limited to designated routes (346,191 acres)

The three use-level areas indicated above are shown on Map 2-26a,b,c,d. Wilderness Areas would be closed. A designated portion of the playa (not including the dunes) would be open. Vehicle use, including OHV use, in the remainder of the planning area would be limited to those BLM system roads and designated routes shown on Map 2-26a,b,c,d.

2.7.2.3 Directional Signage

Directional signs would be installed and maintained at intersections of BLM system roads with other BLM, state, or county roads, and where monitoring indicates additional signs are needed to prevent resource damage or visitor confusion (such as at intersections of designated routes with higher standard roads).

Alternative methods of providing location and directional information, that would supplement traditional signing, would be evaluated and implemented.

2.7.3 CULTURAL RESOURCES, INCLUDING EMIGRANT TRAILS

Cultural resource sites would be identified by site type and placed into appropriate cultural resource use categories, as defined in Appendix I. The emphasis for this alternative would be public use; however, if site monitoring indicated a need for additional protection or site mitigation, the site would be reclassified into a use category appropriate for new management.

2.7.4 NATIVE AMERICAN VALUES

Properties of Cultural and Religious Importance would be managed under the Traditional Use category, as defined in Appendix I. Uses that are consistent with resource objectives for that area and that do not interfere with the sustainability of the resources would be allowed.

2.7.5 PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Paleontological sites would be identified by site type and placed into appropriate paleontological use categories, as defined in Appendix I. The general emphasis for Alternative B would be the same as that for Alternative A, with the addition that paleontological sites would be monitored. If sites were damaged, use categories would be shifted to provide better protection or easier recovery of scientific values. Collection of common invertebrates and petrified wood would be allowed, except in the Hanging Rock Petrified Forest, under the same terms stated for rock collection in the Recreation section.

The Hanging Rock Petrified Forest area would be closed to collection of petrified wood and other fossils, rocks, and minerals, unless such collection was for scientific purposes and was authorized by a permit.

2.7.6 WILDERNESS

2.7.6.1 Wilderness Areas

Wilderness boundaries would be signed at approximately 1-mile intervals along all boundary roads. Boundaries along other features (topography, point to point, etc.) would be signed on an as needed basis.

2.7.6.2 Wilderness Study Area Designations

All 10 parcels within the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Area that were acquired and inventoried for wilderness characteristics (see Map 2-27) would be added to the Wilderness Study Area and managed under the Interim Management Policy. Existing designated routes, as well as the portions of the main Bartlett Butte BLM system road (#2052), the Summer Camp route, the Pole Creek West Road, and the route into Wood Canyon would not be included in the Wilderness Study Area additions and would remain open to vehicle traffic. To exclude camping impacts from the Wilderness Study Area, the Wilderness Study Area boundary would be located 100 feet from the center lines (on both sides) of the above routes in Units 1 and 2 (see Map 2-34).

If monitoring indicates that impacts are occurring to the spawning habitat of the Lahontan cutthroat trout, appropriate motor vehicle restrictions would be implemented in the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Area.

2.7.7 SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS

2.7.7.1 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

2.7.7.1.1 High Rock Canyon ACEC

The High Rock Canyon ACEC would be reduced to the approximately 5,664 acres corresponding to the High Rock Canyon Road

corridor, Stevens Camp, and the Pole Corral areas. (See Map 2-28a.) These areas would be managed to maintain the natural and cultural values of the ACEC while providing opportunities for human use and enjoyment of those resources. Additional special management actions would include the following:

- Camping would be allowed only in designated camping areas.
- No rock climbing would be allowed, to protect the sensitive raptor nesting and cultural resources in the canyon.

A portion of the ACEC between the mouth of High Rock Canyon and 5 miles below Stevens Camp would be closed to visitor use from January 31 through May 15 each year to prevent damage to the emigrant trail and reduce human disturbance of wildlife, including disturbance of bighorn sheep lambing and raptor nesting.

2.7.7.1.2 Soldier Meadows ACEC

The existing ACEC would be increased to approximately 2,077 acres to include public land portions of all critical and occupied desert dace habitat, all basalt cinquefoil populations, and habitat for four springsnails found only in the Soldier Meadows area, consistent with the Recovery Plan for the Rare Species of Soldier Meadows (U.S. Department of the Interior, FWS, 1997). Special management actions would include:

- Camping would be allowed only in designated camping sites.
- The existing hot spring access road would be rerouted away from sensitive resources. All spur roads from the access road would be closed (Map 2-28b).
- Habitats for desert dace, basalt cinquefoil, and springsnails within the ACEC would be fenced to provide protection and improve manageability of these important resources.
- A management approach would be used to adjust management actions to recover rare species in the ACEC.
- Grazing by livestock would be permitted within fenced portions of the ACEC when consistent with the recovery of the listed and rare species within the ACEC. Wild horse use would not be allowed in the fenced portion of the ACEC.

- Appropriate actions would be implemented from the Soldier Meadows Activity Plan and the Recovery Plan for Rare Species of Soldier Meadows.

2.7.7.2 Wild and Scenic Rivers

The five streams outside of Wilderness found eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation (34.1 miles) would be recommended as suitable and managed in accordance with Wild and Scenic River policy (provided in Appendix J). These streams include: Soldier Meadows Hot Springs Creek, Summer Camp Creek, Mahogany Creek (Wilderness Study Area), Snow Creek (outside of Wilderness), and High Rock Canyon Creek (see Map 2-29).

2.7.8 VEGETATION

Management would maintain or establish diversity mosaics and connectivity of upland communities at multiple scales across the landscape. Management would include a variety of methods to increase or decrease sagebrush overstories to meet site-specific resource objectives.



Vegetation manipulation projects would be implemented primarily to move plant communities toward desired conditions, improve structural and species diversity, and protect soil and water resources.

The frequency, distribution, and ecological function of stands of mountain shrubs would be restored to stable conditions, then maintained consistent with site potential and other management objectives.

Site-specific prescriptions would be created for restoration and maintenance of individual aspen stands to achieve the objectives.

On portions of rangelands that are currently dominated by monoculture stands of annual grasses, where the likelihood of restoration is high, habitat complexity and structure would be restored through seeding.

Mature sagebrush cover would be retained on sage-grouse habitats unless an evaluation conducted as part of an adaptive management process shows that alteration of shrub cover would increase habitat values for sage-grouse and other sagebrush-dependent wildlife species.

 Vegetation treatments, including prescribed fire, would be allowed in all Wilderness Areas, consistent with the minimum tool principle, to restore the naturalness of areas that have been impacted by human activities. 

Best Management Practices and guidelines would be regularly evaluated and updated, so that the most current management solutions were used to solve resource and human use issues.

2.7.9 LIVESTOCK GRAZING

The Stanley Camp Pasture within the Soldier Meadows Allotment would be excluded from livestock grazing and trailing.

Grazing within the fenced portions of the Soldier Meadows ACEC would be authorized when an evaluation process concludes that grazing is consistent with the resource management objectives for the ACEC.

The boundaries of the Buffalo Hills, Jackson Mountains, and Paiute Meadows Allotments would be adjusted, as shown on Map 2-30, to better conform to historical grazing patterns. No adjustment in permitted forage use would be made as a result of the boundary adjustments.

2.7.10 WILD HORSES AND BURROS

No additional management is identified for this alternative.

2.7.11 WILDLAND FIRE

In addition to the fire management actions described in Alternative A, fire suppression techniques would be applied for each wildland fire situation to meet the resource objectives specified in this plan and other site-specific activity plans.

Wildland fire and prescribed fire could be used throughout the planning area to manipulate the woody and herbaceous species to meet vegetation objectives.

2.7.12 FISH AND WILDLIFE

2.7.12.1 Fish and Wildlife Management

WP Animal damage control in Wilderness would be allowed only to protect threatened and endangered species, to prevent the transmission of disease to other wildlife or humans, and to prevent serious losses to domestic livestock. Methods of control would be those that had the least impact on wilderness characteristics. **W**

2.7.12.2 Fish and Wildlife Habitat

Habitats for sage-grouse and other sagebrush obligate species would be managed to retain the vegetation and other attributes necessary for the long-term sustainability of sage-grouse and other sagebrush-dependent wildlife species. Management would be guided by Rangeland Health Standards, the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies guidelines, and the local plans of the Washoe-Modoc and North Central working groups. Periodic adjustments to the management of sage-grouse habitats and the guidelines would be based on the best available information.

Best Management Practices and guidelines would be regularly evaluated and updated to ensure that the most current management solutions are being used to solve resource and human use issues.

2.7.12.2.1 Wildlife Water Developments

WP Existing wildlife related projects, including water developments in the NCA and Wilderness Areas, would be repaired, maintained and reconstructed. Inspection of projects would be completed regularly to minimize the amount of maintenance and reconstruction required. Maintenance activities would be conducted as needed, and maintenance of projects in Wilderness would be conducted using methods consistent with minimum tool analysis. These methods could include access by helicopter as well as nonmechanized means.

New water developments or other wildlife-related projects could be constructed when the project would promote healthy, viable, and more naturally

distributed native wildlife populations and would enhance wilderness values; was required to preserve wilderness values; or was required to correct unnatural wildlife habitat conditions caused by human actions. Any projects constructed would be designed to minimize visual impacts.

New water developments could be constructed within Wilderness near High Rock Canyon, subject to the above requirements, to provide water for bighorn lambing that is not subject to recreation-related disturbance. **W**

2.7.13 SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES

No additional management is identified for this alternative.

2.7.14 VISUAL RESOURCES

VRM class designations are shown on Map 2-31.

The South Playa Area would be designated as VRM Class III. The remaining portions of the planning area (excluding Wilderness Areas and the Wilderness Study Area, which are Class I) would be designated VRM Class II.

2.7.15 WATER RESOURCES

No additional management is identified for this alternative.

2.7.16 LANDS AND REALTY

One utility corridor, 2.75 miles wide, south of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks would be designated for buried utilities.

Right-of-way grants for buried utilities would be maintained and permitted in Rustic and Front Country Zones, consistent with attainment of resource objectives (See Maps 2-32 and 2-34).

Land use permits, such as filming permits, would be issued consistent with the guidelines for

special recreation permits, as discussed in the Recreation section.

2.7.17 MINERAL RESOURCES

2.7.17.1 Locatable Minerals Management

Subject to valid existing rights, Federal lands within the South Playa Area, the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Wilderness Study Area, and vehicle access routes outside the NCA, as shown on Map 2-19, would be withdrawn from location, entry, and patent under authority of the 1872 General Mining Law and other applicable laws and regulations.

2.7.17.2 Leasable Minerals Management

Subject to the terms of existing leases, Federal lands within the South Playa Area, the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Area, and vehicle access routes outside the NCA, as shown on Map 2-20, would be withdrawn from the mineral leasing laws.

2.7.17.3 Salable Minerals Management

Subject to valid existing rights, Federal lands within the South Playa Area, the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Area, and vehicle access routes outside the NCA, as shown on Map 2-21, would be withdrawn from the Mineral Materials Act.

2.7.18 RECREATION

2.7.18.1 All Zones

A recreation management plan developed through a public process would be used to determine resource indicators to guide recreation management decisions. Examples of indicators for determining when and where visitor allocations would need to be made include resource damage (e.g. vegetation damage, proliferation of camp sites, human waste

problems, vandalism to historical, archeological, paleontological sites), conflicts with special status plant or animal species, and number of social encounters.

In areas in which adverse impacts on resources or the visitor experience are occurring, limits on human activities could be set. These limits could affect areas of use, group size, duration of stay, number of people or vehicles, or types of activities (See Map 2-33). Developed campgrounds could be constructed if other management tools proved ineffective.

All facilities would be designed to be unobtrusive and aesthetically compatible with the landscape.

If monitoring indicates that there are unacceptable resource impacts on hot spring attraction areas or that public safety is unreasonably compromised by hazards, facilities such as fencing or boardwalks could be constructed around hot springs.

An adaptive management approach would be used to monitor areas or sites. Where visitation is causing resource damage, user conflict, or crowding at attraction areas, a permit system could be implemented to provide information and to increase user awareness, to track visitation, and to reduce use-related impacts.

The development of privately operated campgrounds would be encouraged on public lands outside of the NCA and on private lands both inside and outside the NCA boundaries.


Collection of rocks, minerals, and common invertebrate fossils would be authorized by permit only and would be limited to 25 pounds per day plus one piece, with a maximum collection of 250 pounds per year. Collection using nonmotorized hand tools and causing minimal surface disturbance would be allowed without permit. Collection limits could be waived for scientific or educational use under permit.


If monitoring determines that human use is degrading specific resources, nonmotorized trails would be constructed, relocated, or closed to mitigate human-caused impacts.

If conflicts among different uses occur, or demand necessitates, nonmotorized trails could be developed to separate different user types, or specific times and locations could be designated for certain modes of travel.

The National Desert Trail would be extended through Wilderness Areas and the NCA.

2.7.18.2 Wilderness Zone

 Dispersed camping would be allowed throughout this zone except within one-half mile of designated campsites.

Where monitoring indicates that large groups are having impacts on resources or the visitor experience, limits on group size would be implemented. 

2.7.18.3 Rustic Zone

As shown on Map 2-34, 315,114 acres would be managed for rustic visitor experiences.

Dispersed camping would be allowed throughout this zone except within one-half mile of designated campsites. Specific sites would be designated for camping if monitoring shows that negative impacts on resources are being caused by camping. Dune and hummock areas associated with the playa could be closed to camping if monitoring indicates that these have been negative impacts on sensitive soils, vegetation, or critical wildlife habitat.

Drive in camping would be limited to designated sites in portions of the High Rock Canyon ACEC outside of Wilderness, near cultural resource sites, in dune and hummock areas associated with the playa, and in Rustic Zone portions of the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Area. If monitoring data indicates excess impacts in areas containing sensitive resources, campsites would be closed, and the areas restored.

2.7.18.4 Front Country Zone

As shown on Map 2-34, 140,481 acres would be managed for front country visitor experiences.

Dispersed camping would be allowed on the playa more than one-half mile from designated campsites. Dune and hummock areas associated with the playa could be closed to camping for the protection of sensitive soils, vegetation, and critical wildlife habitat.

2.7.18.5 Special Recreation Permits

A comprehensive permitting process for organized recreation events and other permitted activities would be developed, based on a classification system for events of similar scale and potential impacts. This permit process would

streamline permit issuance; set standards for when permits are required; and support resource, visitor experience, and other management objectives. Permits would be assigned to one of four classes of events (I through IV). A detailed outline of the classification system is provided in Appendix L.

- Class I events would be permitted throughout the planning area and would include no public closure areas.
- Class II events, except those requiring public closure areas, would be permitted throughout the Front Country and Rustic Zones. Class II events that require areas of public closure would be permitted within a designated area of the Front Country playa, as shown on Map 2-35. The number of Class II events would not be limited, except when proposed closure areas would overlap.
- Class III events would be permitted within a designated area of the Front Country, shown on Map 2-35, and for tours along the emigrant trail that are compatible with the objectives for the historic trails.
- Class IV permits would be permitted as shown on Map 2-35

Class III and IV events would be permitted on eight weekends between and including the Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends. During the rest of the year, Class III and IV events would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

An area of the playa, shown on Map 2-35 would be available for Class III and IV events. A rocket launch area would be designated, as shown on Map 2-35, away from main travel corridors and high-visitor-use areas.

Two Class III and IV events could occur simultaneously, but only one could be a Class IV event.

No more than two access points to the playa would be closed in conjunction with Class III and IV events on the same weekend.

2.7.19 PUBLIC OUTREACH AND VISITOR SERVICES

2.7.19.1 All Zones



Interpretive techniques, including on-the-ground elements, would be deployed when monitoring and evaluation determine that they are needed to prevent resource damage or to enhance visitor safety.

A visitor center located along a major access corridor to the NCA, with appropriate staff, would be developed and managed in cooperation with tribal, state, local, or private partners.

Cooperative partnerships would be established with gateway communities, tribal governments, and the private sector. These partnerships would help provide recreational support services on private land and on BLM and tribal lands outside the NCA.

Academic and public research would be encouraged through outreach and agreements with organizations, schools, universities, and qualified individuals (See Appendix M).

2.7.19.2 Wilderness Zone

 No onsite outreach, interpretive, or regulatory information would be provided in the Wilderness Zone, except when required to protect resources. 

2.7.19.3 Rustic Zone

A variety of outreach methods could be used to mitigate adverse resource impacts, such as motorized

trespass in Wilderness, safety hazards, and impacts on private landowners. Methods could include:

- Small information kiosks
- Small, unobtrusive signs
- Self-guided interpretive trails.

2.7.19.4 Front Country Zone

A variety of visitor facilities would be identified through monitoring, to increase public appreciation of the area, mitigate impacts caused by visitor use, and enhance visitor safety.

Maps and related information would be available in a few Front Country kiosks. Low profile signs on low posts would be located at a limited number of important trail and other resource sites.

A variety of outreach methods could be used to mitigate adverse resource impacts, including motorized trespass in Wilderness, safety hazards, and impacts on private landowners. These methods could include:

- Interpretive trails and tours based on maps or brochures, with minimal or no on-the-ground markers, in areas with great interpretive value or to increase awareness of threatened resources
- Onsite interpretive panels, public awareness programs, and informational kiosks in high-use camp areas and along main travel corridors
- A scenic overlook with interpretive and safety information along main travel corridors near the periphery of the NCA
- Small, unobtrusive signs with a horizontal profile at limited sites to educate the public about particular resources or safety hazards.

2.8 ALTERNATIVE C

(Emphasis on Visitation and Interpretation)

2.8.1 LAND HEALTH STANDARDS

Management actions would be the same as Alternative A.

2.8.2 TRANSPORTATION AND OHV ROUTES

2.8.2.1 Functional Classes

Each road segment would be assigned to one of four functional categories with a corresponding maintenance category. Appendix D contains descriptions of functional and maintenance categories.

Table 2-4. BLM System Roads and Other Designated Routes (Alternative C)

Road Number	Road Name	Maintenance Level
Collector Roads		
2048	High Road	4
Local Roads		
2054	High Rock Lake	3
37017	Stevens Camp	3
37032	Grassy	3
Resource Roads		
2049	Sulphur Jackson	3
2051	Pahute Meadow	2
2052	Bartlett Butte	2
2053	Cane Spring	2
2055	Rock Spring	2
2070	Pole Creek West	2
2077	Cow Creek-	3
2086	Rabbithole	2
2088	Donnelly	2
2094	Playa Access	3
37002	High Rock	2
37003	Little Basin	2
37005	Frank's	2
37006	Wall Canyon	2
37012	Weimer	2
37015	Sand Spring	2
37017	Stevens Camp	3
37022	Woodruff	2
37024	Docking Corral	2
37035	Wildcat	2
	Cholona Playa	3
	Access	3
	Trego Playa	3
	Access	
	Garrett Playa	
	Access	
Designated Routes	All other vehicle routes, including wilderness access routes	No maintenance

See Map 2-36 for locations of roads and routes.

Functional classifications or maintenance levels of BLM system roads or designated routes could be changed following an evaluation of vehicle use and resource issues. The evaluation could conclude (1) that the road should be upgraded in functional classification or maintenance level; (2) that other

measures could be implemented that would resolve resource or safety issues; or (3) that no action would occur.

Where public roads cross private property, BLM would attempt to acquire public access easements or to develop road alignments that avoid the private property.

Public access on the east side of the Black Rock Range from Humboldt County Road 214 would be developed to provide north-south access to Black Rock Point and east-west access to BLM Road #2051 (Pahute Meadow Road).

2.8.2.2 OHV Designations

Vehicle use, including OHV use, would be managed by designating three use levels to cover the planning area. These would include:

- Areas that are open to vehicle use (122,905 acres)
- Areas that are closed to vehicle use (751,879 acres)
- Areas where vehicle use is limited to designated routes (346,191 acres)

The three use-level areas indicated above are shown on Maps 2-37a,b,c,d. Wilderness Areas would be closed. A designated part of the playa (not including the dunes) would be open. Vehicle use, including OHV use, in the remainder of the planning area would be limited to those BLM system roads and designated routes shown on Maps 2-37a,b,c,d.

2.8.2.3 Directional Signage

Directional signs would be installed and maintained at intersections of BLM system roads with other BLM, state, or county roads, and where monitoring indicated additional signs are needed to prevent resource damage or visitor confusion (such as at intersections of designated routes with higher standard roads).

Alternative methods of providing location and directional information, that would supplement traditional signing, would be evaluated and implemented.

2.8.3 CULTURAL RESOURCES, INCLUDING EMIGRANT TRAILS

Cultural resource sites would be identified by site type and placed into appropriate cultural resource use categories, as defined in Appendix I. Site interpretation would be emphasized to provide visitors with information on the historic importance of the area and to provide for scientific discovery.

In accordance with applicable regulations, BLM would encourage scientific research into cultural resources, including public participation in inventories, excavations, and scientific analyses (See Appendix M). In addition, information would be disseminated through publications, museums, and visitor centers.

2.8.4 NATIVE AMERICAN VALUES

Properties of Cultural and Religious Importance would be managed under the Traditional Use category, as defined in Appendix I. Uses that are consistent with the resource objectives for the area and that do not interfere with the sustainability of those resources would be allowed.

2.8.5 PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES


Paleontological sites would be identified by site type and placed into appropriate paleontological use categories, as defined in Appendix I.

The emphasis for Alternative C would be on scientific research. Collection of common invertebrates and petrified wood would be allowed under the same terms stated for rock collection in the Recreation section, except in the Hanging Rock Petrified Forest, which would be closed to collection of petrified wood and other fossils, rocks, and minerals unless such collection is for scientific purposes and is authorized by an appropriate permit.

In accordance with applicable regulations, BLM would encourage scientific research into paleontological resources, including public participation in inventories, digs, and laboratory analyses (See Appendix M). In addition, information would be disseminated through publications, museums, and visitor centers.

2.8.6 WILDERNESS

2.8.6.1 Wilderness Areas

 Wilderness boundaries would be signed at approximately 1-mile intervals along all boundary roads. Boundaries along other features (topography, point to point, etc.) would be signed on an as needed basis.


Wilderness Areas and the Wilderness Study Area would be designated as either Wild Emphasis or Natural Emphasis Wilderness Zones, as depicted on Map 2-43 (see Glossary). This zoning does not imply that certain Wilderness Areas or the Wilderness Study Area would not be managed in accordance with the 1964 Wilderness Act or the Interim Management Policy. Nor does it imply that certain Wilderness Areas have less wilderness character than others. Many management actions would be common to both zones.

The Wilderness Act of 1964 describes wilderness as (1) an area that retains its primeval character and influence and is primarily natural in appearance and (2) an area that is untrammeled, unmanipulated, and not intentionally controlled. These two characterizations are not always compatible. When an area is truly in a pristine condition and has been shaped solely by the forces of nature, the characteristics are compatible. But when the naturalness of an area has been affected by human influences (such as the introduction of exotic flora and fauna, the suppression of natural fires, or erosion caused by visitor use), the two characteristics may be incompatible.

Although all 10 Wilderness Areas included in this plan must be managed in accordance with the Wilderness Act of 1964, and the Wilderness Study Area must be managed in accordance with the Interim Management Policy, there could be differences among the zones that focus management

on the above-mentioned values of “naturalness” and “wildness.”

A Wild Emphasis Zone would focus on the wild, untrammeled, unmanipulated aspects of wilderness. The North Jackson Mountains, South Jackson Mountains, North Black Rock Range, and Pahute Peak Wilderness Areas would be managed as Wild Emphasis zones.

A Natural Emphasis Zone would focus on restoring natural conditions in areas that have been impacted by human use. Management in such a zone would focus on maintaining and enhancing the natural, pristine aspects of wilderness. The High Rock Lake, Calico Mountains, Black Rock Desert, High Rock Canyon, East Fork High Rock Canyon, and Little High Rock Canyon Wilderness Areas and the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Wilderness Study Area would be managed as Natural Emphasis zones. 

2.8.6.2 Wilderness Study Area Designations

Of the 10 parcels within the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Area that were acquired and inventoried for wilderness characteristics, nine parcels (947 acres) would be added to the existing Wilderness Study Area. One acquired 145-acre parcel (Unit 2) would not be designated as part of the Wilderness Study Area, to allow construction of a developed campground within the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Area.

The existing designated routes and portions of the main Bartlett Butte BLM system road (#2052), the Summer Camp route, the Pole Creek West Road and the route into Wood Canyon would not be included in the Wilderness Study Area additions and would remain open to vehicle traffic. To exclude camping impacts from the Wilderness Study Area in Unit 1, the Wilderness Study Area boundary would be located 100 feet from the centerlines (on both sides) of the above routes in Unit 1 (see Map 2-27).

2.8.7 SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS

2.8.7.1 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

2.8.7.1.1 High Rock Canyon ACEC

None of the High Rock Canyon area would be designated as an ACEC.

2.8.7.1.2 Soldier Meadows ACEC

None of the Soldier Meadows area would be designated as an ACEC. The unique combination of natural and cultural resources located within this area would be maintained. Management recommendations stated in the Soldier Meadows Activity Plan would be implemented consistent with the Act.

2.8.7.2 Wild and Scenic Rivers

None of the eligible stream segments would be recommended as suitable for Wild and Scenic River designation.

2.8.8 VEGETATION

Management would maintain or establish diversity mosaics and connectivity of upland communities at multiple scales across the landscape. Management would include a variety of methods to increase or decrease sagebrush overstories to meet site-specific resource objectives.

Vegetation manipulation projects would be implemented primarily to move plant communities toward desired conditions, improve structural and species diversity, and protect soil and water resources.

The frequency, distribution and ecological function of stands of mountain shrubs would be restored to stable conditions, then maintained consistent with site potential and other management objectives.

Site-specific prescriptions would be created for restoration and maintenance of individual aspen stands to achieve objectives.

On portions of rangelands that are currently dominated by monoculture stands of annual grasses, where the likelihood of restoration is high, habitat complexity and structure would be restored through seeding.

Sagebrush cover and composition would be managed to meet desired plant community objectives established for a localized area to meet Rangeland Health Standards and the objectives of the planning area.

Vegetation treatments, including prescribed fire, would be allowed in the following Natural Emphasis Wilderness Areas, consistent with the minimum tool principle:

- Black Rock Desert
- Calico
- High Rock Lake
- Little High Rock Canyon
- High Rock Canyon
- East Fork High Rock Canyon.

2.8.9 LIVESTOCK GRAZING

The Stanley Camp Pasture within the Soldier Meadows Allotment would be excluded from grazing on a regular basis. Grazing in this area might occur under an approved grazing prescription developed specifically to accomplish the objectives of the RMP.

2.8.10 WILD HORSES AND BURROS

In addition to the actions listed in the Common to All Alternatives section, a permanent facility would be constructed to support wild horse and burro management within the planning area. The facility would provide opportunities for low-cost horse gathers and adoptions by the public.

2.8.11 WILDLAND FIRE

In addition to the fire management actions described in Alternative A, fire suppression techniques would be applied for each wildland fire

situation to meet the resource objectives specified in this plan and other site-specific activity plans.

Wildland fire and prescribed fire outside of Wilderness Areas could be used to manipulate the woody and herbaceous species to meet vegetation objectives.

WP Prescribed fire could be applied in the Natural Emphasis Wilderness Areas (Black Rock Desert, Calico, High Rock Lake, Little High Rock Canyon, High Rock Canyon, and East Fork High Rock Canyon Wilderness Areas).

No prescribed fire would be applied in Wild Emphasis Wilderness Areas. **W**

2.8.12 FISH AND WILDLIFE

2.8.12.1 Fish and Wildlife Management

WP Animal damage control would be allowed in Natural Emphasis Wilderness only to protect threatened and endangered species, to prevent the transmission of disease to other wildlife or humans, and to prevent serious losses to domestic livestock. Methods of control would be those with the least impact on wilderness characteristics.

No animal damage control would be allowed in Wild Emphasis Wilderness. **W**

2.8.12.2 Fish and Wildlife Habitat

Sage-grouse habitats would be managed to retain vegetation and other attributes necessary for the long-term sustainability of sage-grouse and other sagebrush-dependent wildlife species. Management would be guided by Rangeland Health Standards, the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies guidelines, and the local plans of the Washoe-Modoc and North Central working groups. Periodic adjustments to the guidelines and to the management of sage-grouse habitats would be based on the best available information.

Best Management Practices and guidelines would be regularly evaluated and updated using the most current management solutions to solve resource and human use issues.

2.8.12.2.1 Wildlife Water Developments

Water developments within the NCA could be constructed and maintained to support wildlife populations. **WP** In Natural Emphasis Wilderness Areas, existing wildlife-related projects would be repaired, maintained, and reconstructed. Inspection of projects would be completed on a regular basis to minimize the amount of maintenance and reconstruction required. Maintenance activities would be conducted as needed and maintenance of projects in Wilderness would be conducted using methods consistent with minimum tool analysis. These methods could include access by helicopter as well as by nonmechanized means.

In Wild Emphasis Wilderness, existing water developments would not be maintained. Water developments would be removed.

In Natural Emphasis Wilderness, new water developments or other wildlife-related projects could be constructed when the project would promote healthy, viable, and more naturally distributed native wildlife populations and enhance wilderness values; was required to preserve Wilderness values; or was required to correct unnatural wildlife habitat conditions caused by human actions. Any projects constructed would be designed to minimize visual impacts.

New water developments could be constructed within Wilderness near High Rock Canyon, subject to the above requirements, to provide water for bighorn lambing that was not subject to recreation-related disturbance.

No new water developments would be constructed in the Wild Emphasis Wilderness Areas.

W

2.8.13 SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES

No additional management is identified for this alternative.

2.8.14 VISUAL RESOURCES

VRM class designations are shown on Map 2-38.

The South Playa Area and two utility corridors would be designated as VRM Class III. The remaining portions of the planning area (excluding Wilderness Areas and the Wilderness Study Area, which are Class I) would be designated VRM Class II.

2.8.15 WATER RESOURCES

No additional management is identified for this alternative.

2.8.16 LANDS AND REALTY

Two utility corridors encompassing existing utilities would be designated for buried and aboveground utilities. The first would be located two and three-quarter miles south of the Union Pacific Railroad; the second, one mile on either side of the existing Los Angeles Department of Water and Power line.

Rights-of-way for buried and aboveground facilities would be issued, consistent with meeting the objectives of the plan in the Rustic Zone, within non-playa portions of the Front Country Zone, and in the south playa portion of the planning area, in support of geothermal leasing (See Maps 2-39 and 2-43).

Land use permits would be issued consistent with the guidelines for special recreation permits, as discussed in the Recreation section.

2.8.17 MINERAL RESOURCES

2.8.17.1 Locatable Minerals Management

Subject to valid existing rights, Federal lands within the South Playa area, the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Area, and vehicle access routes outside the NCA, as shown on Map 2-19, would be withdrawn from location, entry, and patent under authority of the 1872 General Mining Law and other applicable laws and regulations.

2.8.17.2 Leasable Minerals Management

Subject to the terms of existing leases, Federal lands in the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Area and vehicle access routes outside the NCA, as shown on Map 2-40, would be withdrawn from the mineral leasing laws. Federal lands in the South Playa Area would remain open only to the 1970 Geothermal Steam Act.

2.8.17.3 Salable Minerals Management

Subject to valid existing rights, Federal lands within the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Area, as shown on Map 2-41, would be withdrawn from the Mineral Materials Act. The South Playa Area and vehicle access routes outside the NCA, as shown on Map 2-41, would remain open to development of mineral materials.

2.8.18 RECREATION

2.8.18.1 All Zones

In areas in which adverse impacts on resources or the visitor experience are occurring, limits on human activities could be set. These limits could affect areas of use, group size, duration of stay, number of people or vehicles, or types of activities (See Map 2-42). Developed campgrounds could be constructed if other management tools prove ineffective.

All facilities would be designed to be unobtrusive and aesthetically compatible with the landscape.

If monitoring indicates that there are unacceptable resource impacts on hot spring attraction areas or that public safety is unreasonably compromised by hazards, facilities such as fencing or boardwalks could be constructed around hot springs.

In areas or sites where increased visitation is causing resource damage, user conflict, or crowding at attraction areas, a permit collection system could be used to generate money for construction and maintenance of visitor facilities, enforcement of regulations, to provide information to and increase


awareness of users, and to ration use in attraction areas.

The development of privately operated campgrounds would be encouraged on public lands outside of the NCA and on private lands both inside and outside the NCA boundaries.


Collection of rocks, minerals, petrified wood, and common invertebrate fossils would be limited to 25 pounds per day plus one piece, with a maximum collection of 250 pounds per year. Collection using nonmotorized hand tools and causing minimal surface disturbance would be allowed without permit. Collection limits could be waived for scientific use when authorized by permit.

Point-to-point orienteering routes, including the National Desert Trail, could be established for hikers and equestrian users in the NCA and Natural Emphasis wilderness. In areas where monitoring determines that human use is degrading specific resources, segments of trail could be built to mitigate human-caused impacts. If conflicts among different uses occur or demand necessitates, specific times and locations could be designated for certain modes of travel, or trails could be developed to separate different user types. Designated routes that provide loops of varying degrees of difficulty for day use and multiday tours would be provided in the Rustic and Front Country Zones. A detailed map highlighting attraction areas and suitable overnight destinations would be provided at trailheads.

2.8.18.2 Wilderness Zone

 Approximately 765,000 acres would be managed for wilderness visitor experiences, as shown on Map 2-43.

Dispersed camping would be allowed throughout this zone, except within one-half mile of designated campsites.

Limits on group size would not be applied, and overnight permits would not be required. 

2.8.18.3 Rustic Zone

As shown on Map 2-42, 301,645 acres would be managed for rustic visitor experiences.

Dispersed camping would be allowed throughout this zone, except within one-half mile of designated campsites. Specific sites would be

designated for camping when monitoring shows that camping is causing resource impacts.

The following areas containing sensitive resources would be designated as day-use only (See Map 2-43).

- Portions of High Rock Canyon outside of Wilderness, habitat areas for rare species at Soldier Meadows
- Class A and B historic trail segments
- Rustic portions of the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Area.

Designated campsites would be established in areas of traditional camping use. Existing campsites experiencing unacceptable resource impacts would be closed and restored to natural conditions. New primitive campsites might be developed near popular sites to redistribute use to more suitable locations and to allow rehabilitation of sensitive areas. Additional developed sites would be considered in the future, as demand or resource conflicts warrant.

No limits on group size or length of stay would be required, except in accordance with existing regulations.

2.8.18.4 Front Country Zone

As shown on Map 2-43, 153,950 acres would be managed for front country visitor experiences.

Dispersed camping would be allowed on the playa. Portions of the dune and hummock areas bordering the playa, less than one-half mile from designated campsites would be closed to camping for the protection of sensitive soils, vegetation, and critical wildlife habitat.

Designated campsites would be established in areas of traditional camping use. Existing campsites experiencing unacceptable resource impacts would be closed and the areas restored to natural conditions. New primitive campsites might be developed near popular sites to redistribute use to more suitable locations and to allow rehabilitation of sensitive areas. Additional developed sites would be considered in the future as demand or resource conflicts warrant.

No limits on group size or length of stay would be required, except in accordance with existing regulations.

2.8.18.5 Special Recreation Permits

A comprehensive permitting process for organized recreation events and other permitted activities would be developed, based on a classification system for events of similar scale and potential impacts. This permit process would streamline permit issuance; set standards for when permits are required; and support resource, visitor experience, and other management objectives.

Permits would be assigned to one of four classes of events (I through IV). A detailed outline of the classification system is provided in Appendix L.

- Class I events would be permitted throughout the planning area and would include no public closure areas.
- Class II events, except those requiring public closure areas, would be permitted throughout Front Country and Rustic zones. Class II events that require areas of public closure would be permitted within a designated area of the Front Country playa as shown on Map 2-44.
- Class III events would be permitted within a designated area of the Front Country shown on Map 2-44, and for tours along the emigrant trail that are compatible with the objectives for the historic trails.
- Class IV events would be permitted in areas shown on Map 2-44.

Class III and IV events could occur at any time. There would be no restrictions other than those required by the proposals themselves on the number of Class III and IV events that could occur simultaneously.

Closure of the entire playa could be permitted in conjunction with Class III and IV events. Periods of closure of the entire playa could not exceed 2 consecutive days or 48 total hours within any 30-day period.

2.8.19 PUBLIC OUTREACH AND VISITOR SERVICES

2.8.19.1 All Zones



A visitor center and administrative facility, with appropriate staffing, would be developed in or near

the NCA and managed in cooperation with tribal, state, or local partners.

Cooperative partnerships would be established with gateway communities, tribal governments, and the private sector to provide recreational support services on private land, on tribal lands, and on BLM lands inside and outside the NCA boundaries.

Academic and public research would be encouraged through outreach and agreements with organizations, schools, universities, and qualified individuals (See Appendix M).

2.8.19.2 Wilderness Zone

 No onsite outreach, interpretive, or regulatory information would be provided except when necessary to protect resources. 

2.8.19.3 Rustic Zone

Interpretive trails and self-guided tours based on maps or brochures, with minimal or no on-the-ground markers, would be developed in areas with high interpretive value and to increase awareness of sensitive resources.

Kiosks would be placed in limited locations in the Rustic Zone where monitoring indicates resource damage and at points of interest, to provide regulatory information and information about sensitive resources.

Small, unobtrusive signs with a horizontal profile would be used to interpret a wide range of resources and points of special interest.

A proactive approach would be taken to prevent resource impacts, provide interpretation, and protect public safety.

2.8.19.4 Front Country Zone

Onsite interpretive panels, public awareness programs, and kiosks would be widely available throughout the Front Country Zone.

Self-guided tours would be developed along roadways and popular trails near developed campgrounds to interpret area resources. Maps and related information would be available in front country kiosks.

A small interpretive center would be located at or near one or more of the following locations:

Stevens Camp, Soldier Meadows, Gerlach, and Flowing Wells.

Onsite interpretive panels, public awareness programs, and kiosks would be available at many locations in the Front Country Zone. Self-guided tours would be developed to interpret area resources. Maps and related information would be available at kiosks within the Front Country Zone.

2.9 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT INCLUDED

2.9.1 DESIGNATION OF ACECs FOR IMPORTANT BIOLOGICAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

A request to “develop and designate additions to Areas of Critical Environmental Concern to include special areas of biological importance, including sage-grouse leks, nesting areas, brooding areas, and winter range, Pronghorn Antelope critical summer and winter range, and of paleontological importance such as the woolly mammoth sites” was received during the scoping period. No specific areas for the designations and no special management actions were identified.

During alternative development, important seasonal habitats for wildlife species and important paleontological sites were evaluated by biologists and other resource specialists for specific management needs. Several potential ACECs were evaluated, but no special management actions were identified that went beyond the current or potential future management direction contained in the alternatives presented in this plan. In addition, discussions with the Nevada Department of Wildlife and other interested groups and individuals, conducted as part of the Resource Advisory Council NCA Subgroup, raised concerns about potential adverse effects on sensitive resources associated with ACEC designations.

Because of the lack of specificity in the scoping request related to geographic area or special management requirements, it was concluded that the request did not meet the ACEC criteria. Therefore no additional ACECs related to

biological or paleontological resources are considered in this plan.

2.9.2 DESIGNATION OF THE PROPOSED SOLDIER- COLEMAN COLLAPSING CHASM ACEC

A nomination for an ACEC of unspecified size was received from the Committee for Idaho’s High Desert. The nomination seeks an ACEC designation for a small area of gullies associated with lower Colman and Soldier Creeks near Soldier Meadows, to protect human life and safety from natural hazards. This entire area falls within the North Black Rock Range Wilderness Area. No specific special management actions were contained within the nomination; however, abusive livestock grazing was referred to in the nomination related to the hazard.

The gullies referenced in this nomination are decades old and have stabilizing riparian vegetation in the bottoms. Although there are steep, unstable banks associated with the gullies, the long-term restoration of the site would involve banks’ collapsing to allow widening of the current narrow floodplain into a broader floodplain to achieve more stable conditions. In addition, the sediment introduced by collapsing the banks would provide most of the sediment needed to raise the floodplain and water table above the current levels. Livestock use can be a factor in streambed alteration; however, implementation of livestock grazing practices in the allotment that are designed to comply with the Rangeland Health Standards and other regulations would be sufficient to allow improvement of the conditions of Soldier Meadows and Colman Creek.

After evaluation by resource specialists, it was determined that the nomination did not meet the ACEC requirement necessitating special management to meet the needs of the relevant and important resources.

2.9.3 DESIGNATION OF THE PROPOSED PRONGHORN ACEC

In 1998, the Oregon Natural Desert Association and 22 cosponsoring organizations nominated 1.1 million acres of BLM-administered lands surrounding and connecting Hart Mountain and Sheldon National Wildlife Refuges as an ACEC. Major management actions in the proposal included removing livestock grazing and wild horses and facilitating movement of pronghorn herds in the area.

Biologists and other resource specialists from state wildlife agencies in Oregon and Nevada, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and BLM offices in Lakeview and Burns in Oregon, Winnemucca in Nevada, and Cedarville in California evaluated the proposal. The evaluation concluded that the proposed area as a whole did not meet the ACEC criteria. Therefore, this proposal is not considered further in this plan. However, portions of the proposed area are associated with existing ACECs in the High Rock Canyon and Soldier Meadows areas. Those areas are considered in detail in this plan.

The complete Pronghorn ACEC proposal and the evaluation report can be viewed online at www.or.blm.gov/lakeview/planning.

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